

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXI, Issue No. 300

MONDAY DECEMBER 19, 2011

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POLL RESULTS

Have you put up any Christmas décor yet?

Yes 65

No 67

Sunday, December 18, 2011



INSIDE



Fashion Show

The first ever Joeten Christmas Fashion Show debuts on Saturday night.

LOCAL...Page 14



Out of Iraq

The last U.S. soldiers rolled out of Iraq at daybreak on Sunday.

FOCUS...Page 18

Navy looks into closure of Tinian mortar range

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S. Navy is now looking into changing Tinian's mortar range status to "inactive," which would pave the way for a site investigation and cleanup of hazardous materials, following safety and tourism concerns that Tinian Mayor Ramon Dela Cruz raised as early as September.

» **New land management deal with US military being pushed**

Two-thirds of Tinian land is leased by the U.S. military.

Dela Cruz, at the same time, asked Gov. Benigno R. Fitial as president of the CNMI Military Integration Management Committee to initiate discussions with the U.S. Department of Defense on a new land management agreement.

This proposed new agreement would be for, among other things, maintenance of roadways, mowing, and

See NAVY on Page 4

Nearly 400 withdraw Fund contributions

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The NMI Retirement Fund reported a significant increase in the number of individuals who withdrew their contributions from the pension program last fiscal year.

Fund records show that a total of 389 members refunded their contributions in fiscal year 2011—from Oct. 1, 2010, through Sept. 30, 2011. This is a 33-percent increase over fiscal year 2010, which had 292 members who refunded their contribu-

See NEARLY on Page 4

Koblerville Elementary tops caroling contest—again

» **KagES rules best float competition for 2012**



By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Koblerville Elementary School was hailed the big winner in the Christmas in the Marianas festival Saturday night after successfully defending its title and bagging the championship honor for the second time.

Koblerville bested six other elementary schools in the caroling competition and went home with the \$1,000

See KOBLERVILLE on Page 4

The 25-member of Umang Glee Club of the Koblerville Elementary School celebrate after being named the overall champion of the festival's caroling competition. Other photo, Kagman Elementary School principal Ignacia Demapan waves to the crowd during Saturday's parade of the annual Christmas in the Marianas float competition. Made of all natural and recycled materials, KagES was adjudged the best float entry for the festival.



MONETH G. DEPOSA

Flash floods kill more than 500 in Philippines

By BULLIT MARQUEZ and JIM GOMEZ
ASSOCIATED PRESS

ILIGAN, Philippines (AP)—Tropical Storm Washi blew away Sunday after devastating a wide swath of the southern Philippines with flash floods that killed at least 521 people as they slept and turned two coastal cities into a muddy

See FLOODS on Page 4

Inos: Govt deficit could be \$15M to \$20M. PAGE 2
Fitial seeks help from Murkowski on \$100M loan. PAGE 3

Local

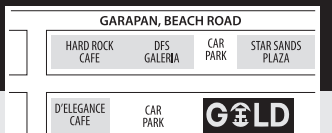
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Inos: Govt deficit could be \$15M to \$20M in FY 2011

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

As the Fitial administration prepares its written 2011 State of the Commonwealth report to the Legislature, Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos said the government deficit for fiscal year 2011 could be \$15 million to \$20 million.

This is within the same range of the fiscal year 2010 government deficit of \$18.6 million, based on Gov. Benigno R. Fitial's annual report of December 2010.

In an interview on Friday, Inos said this will bring the CNMI's cumulative deficit to over \$300 million, including unpaid obligations to the NMI Retirement Fund.

"So far we're just catching up fast on some of the prior year obligations that were paid. It's putting heavy strain on current resources because of prior years' stuff. We have deficit," he said.

The government's revised 2011 budget of \$122 million further went down to \$102 million in 2012 as revenues are hard to come by, with only tourism as a major industry and business have been closing one by one.

Cash shortfall has also resulted in delayed payroll for non-critical government employees. However, because of improved collections the last few weeks, the government was able to make timely payroll last week

for all employees.

It's yet to be determined how the three scheduled payrolls in December would further affect finances.

Meanwhile, the Legislature has not requested the governor to deliver a 2011 State of the Commonwealth Address before the end of the year, and this is the reason why the governor said he is just going to come up with a written report to comply with the Constitution.

Article III Section 9(b) of the CNMI Constitution requires the governor to report at least annually to the Legislature regarding the affairs of the Commonwealth and new measures that are necessary or desirable.

OAG asks court to substitute govt as defendant in police brutality lawsuit

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Office of the Attorney General is asking the federal court to dismiss former police officer Jesse Dubrall as a defendant in a police brutality lawsuit and instead substitute the CNMI government in his place.

Assistant attorney general Michael A. Stanker asserted that the Commonwealth is the proper defendant as Dubrall was acting within the scope of his employment when the incident happened.

The government lawyer said that when a Commonwealth employee is sued for wrongful or negligent conduct, the Commonwealth Employees Liability Reform and Tort Compensation Act empowers the attorney general to certify that the employee "was acting within the scope of his/her office of employment at the time of the incident out of which the claim arose."

Upon the attorney general's certification, Stanker said the employee is dismissed from the action, and the government is substituted as the defendant in place of the employee.

Stanker said Dubrall admits to being at the residence of plaintiff Jin Dong Wang in As Lito for the purpose of executing a valid search and arrest warrant. The lawyer said that

Dubrall admits to holding a gun and telling Wang to get on the ground.

He said Dubrall further admits that he handcuffed Wang, but denies plaintiff's allegation that he assaulted and battered him.

"It is undisputed that Dubrall's actions were in furtherance of DPS' business," Stanker said.

The lawyer said the intent of the Legislature in passing CELRTCA was to relieve Commonwealth employees from the cost and effort of defending a lawsuit for allegedly tortious conduct undertaken within the scope of employment, and to place those burdens on the government's shoulders alone.

Stanker said Dubrall temporarily arrested Wang who failed to comply with his order and that is all that happened.

Wang, a Chinese national, is suing Dubrall for assault and battery, false arrest, emotional distress, violation of civil rights, and negligence. Wang alleges that Dubrall hit him with a gun's butt and repeatedly kicked him after mistaking him for another person that police were trying to arrest on Oct. 18, 2010.

Dubrall denies using unreasonable force in arresting Wang. Stanker said that Dubrall's conduct was privileged as an act of self-defense.

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Fitial seeks help from Murkowski on \$100M interest-free loan

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial said he is seeking the help of Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) to secure a \$100 million interest-free loan from the U.S. Department of Energy in line with the administration's focus on geothermal energy production.

The government has yet to award a contract to a firm that will investigate the viability of tapping geothermal power on Saipan.

Fitial said if after the contract is awarded and the drilling shows no viable geothermal power source on Saipan, then the CNMI government won't push through with its plan to borrow money from the U.S. Energy Department.

But he said regardless of the outcome of the drilling, he expects Murkowski to visit Saipan

early next year.

The governor said he would know more about the specific date of the visit after the National Governors Association meeting in February 2012.

Fitial, now the president again of the CNMI Republican Party, has long invited Murkowski to visit the CNMI not only on renewable energy but also for federalization and other issues affecting the CNMI.

Murkowski's father, former Sen. Frank Murkowski, served as chair of the Natural Resources Committee and at the time, he was a source of assistance for the CNMI in the U.S. Senate. Since succeeding her father in the U.S. Senate, Sen. Lisa Murkowski continues to keep an eye on the islands, the Fitial administration said.

"She's helping me with that \$100 million interest-free loan

from Department of Energy... Like I said, drilling must be done first... The contract is contingent on the result of the drilling," Fitial said.

Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos, now heading the CNMI's renewable energy matters, said the contract for geothermal drilling could be awarded in January or February. He said there were a few bidders that responded to the RFP. The CNMI got a \$1.2 million grant from Interior for geothermal investigation.

He said after contract award, it could take several more months for the CNMI to have a good idea

whether there's really a viable geothermal energy source.

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp., which issued a request for proposal for companies to conduct geothermal investigation, believes that Saipan's proximity to the active Mariana volcanic arc, extensional fault-

ing, and the occurrence of shallow water wells with anomalous temperature suggest that sufficient geothermal resources may exist beneath Saipan to support generation of electricity using binary plant technology.

If it turns out from the experts'

investigation that it is feasible, then CUC will invite companies to bid on the actual development and commissioning of a geothermal energy power plant. If the results are negative, then CUC will have to continue with other renewable energy sources.

Judge modifies bail of suspected beer thief

Superior Court associate judge David A. Wiseman has modified a bail order to allow the temporary release of one of two suspects in the burglary of a bar in Garapan where two bottles of beer were stolen.

Wiseman on Friday allowed 23-year-old Christopher Raymond Kaipat to post a \$200 cash bail and \$1,800 unsecured bond, instead of the \$2,000 cash the court earlier imposed.

Kaipat was released to his

aunt, who will serve as a third-party custodian.

The judge barred Kaipat from having any contact with his co-defendant, Mwoloscholopi Crisogino Litulumar Romolor, 24, and to stay away from Round Two Bar.

The Office of the Attorney General had charged Kaipat and Romolor with burglary, theft, conspiracy to commit burglary, and conspiracy to commit theft.

(Ferdie de la Torre)

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	Aetna High Option	\$206.90	No Dental Plan
	Aetna Low Option	\$191.39	No Dental Plan
	StayWell Annual savings = \$1,999 + Potential Refund of \$ 750		
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High Option: Single = \$ 4,000; family = \$ 12,000
Low Option: Single = \$ 10,000; family = \$ 30,000

CUC, Retirement Fund settlement negotiation fails

» Court battle on \$4.4M delinquent contribution continues

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The settlement negotiation between the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. and the NMI Retirement Fund has fallen through, signaling a continuation in the court battle between the two agencies.

Fund board of trustees chair Sixto K. Igisomar disclosed this Friday, confirming that the exchanges between CUC and the Fund did not result in an amicable agreement.

"The negotiation pretty much failed because CUC is asking us

to do something that is outside of our parameters, which is to follow the numbers they are using based on some legislation," said Igisomar.

The Fund is suing the utilities corporation to collect on some \$4.44 million in unpaid employer contributions (\$3.1 million as of April 2011), penalties (\$740,462), and damages (\$527,716).

In the standing lawsuit, the Fund also wants the court to declare that CUC's attempt to pass on its obligation to the central government is fraudulent on creditors and is void.

CUC's settlement proposal, according to Igisomar, uses a different equation to calculate its outstanding contributions to the Fund. He said that based on CUC's offer, it wants to pay an amount that is about 50 percent less than what the Fund says it owes. The Fund responded to CUC's proposal with a counter-offer, which CUC also later rejected.

Igisomar insists that the Fund is using the proper method of calculating CUC's unpaid employer contributions.

"Public Law 6-17 is what we're following because laws that came after that never changed P.L. 6-17. Obviously, CUC is challenging it so the court needs to make the deci-

sion," he said, adding that one big thing that caused the negotiations to fail was the different interpretation of the laws.

According to the Fund, under the law, CUC is required to pay employer contributions to the Fund based on the

gross salaries or wages of its employees and the Fund's actuarially determined contribution amount. These employer contributions must be remitted to the Fund within five working days following the end of each payroll date.

Saipan Tribune learned that CUC, in its proposal, cited some differences in legal opinion on how the Fund determined the total debt of CUC. The utilities firm cited some statutes to point out the "wrong calculation" made by the Fund in coming up with the \$3.1 million unpaid contributions.

Finance says *Variety* owner has satisfied tax obligations

Younis Art Studio Inc., the owner of *Marianas Variety*, has already satisfied its tax obligations to the CNMI government, according to the Department of Finance.

Richard F. Santos, acting manager for Finance's collection and remittance branch, filed Thursday in the U.S. District Court for the NMI a certificate of release of CNMI tax lien to Younis Art Studio Inc.

Santos certified that the company has satisfied the requirements of Revenue and Tax regulations for taxes amounting to \$328,412.63 and "for all statutory additions, penalties, or both."

"Therefore, the lien for these taxes and additions, has been released," Santos said in court papers.

Finance filed the notice of tax lien against Younis Art Studio Inc. in February this year. The

company allegedly failed to pay its Business Gross Revenue Tax from 2005 to 2010 and its withholding tax from 2006 to 2009 in the total amount of \$328,412.63.

Younis Art Studio Inc., through counsel Robert T. Torres, stated that the company already has an agreement with Finance, which it continues to honor and has every intention of fulfilling. (**Ferdie de la Torre**)



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SAES' toy-decorated tree wins top prize in PDM contest

By **CLARISSA V. DAVID**
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

San Antonio Elementary School's Christmas tree decorated with colorful toys—including a life-size Optimus Prime—all made of recyclable materials was adjudged the winner of the 6th Christmas Tree Decorating Contest.

Garnering a total of 364 points from eight judges, San Antonio bested 15 elementary schools in the annual competition hosted by PDM Promoters, Inc.

The winning school took home the grand prize of \$5,000 worth of education tax credit from RNV Construction, Inc. during a program at Paseo de

Marianas on Dec. 15.

"It's a great collaboration between the parents, the students, and the teachers," school principal James Sablan told *Saipan Tribune* shortly after the announcement of winners. "They all chipped in and helped out to decorate it."

In coming up with ideas for their tree decorations in line with the theme "Green Christmas for the Children of the Marianas," Sablan said they thought about what children love to receive during holidays and came up with toys.

The result was a vibrant and well-decorated Christmas tree featuring not just the Transformers icon but other chil-

dren's toys like carts and trucks made of 5-gallon and small water bottles, biscuit containers, empty detergent and softener bottles, bento boxes, and other recyclable materials.

Did they expect to win the contest? Sablan said no. "I told them to just enjoy it. Whatever place we have, let's be happy about it."

The winning group celebrated their victory in advance, as Sablan said they already hosted a barbecue appreciation party on Constitution Day or Dec. 8 for those who were involved in the contest.

School staffer Olive Bate-

man, in a separate interview, noted that parental involvement was key to their success. "It was really a labor of love from everyone."

Sablan said they are looking at using the prize money to purchase outdoor benches for the students. "That's the idea, but we'll probably sit down and figure out what's the best way to use the money for the school."

With their win, Bateman said they want to join next year's contest. "This early, we'll already start planning and collecting recyclable materials," she added.

Other winners were Green Meadow School, second prize

winner with 358 points; Koblerville Elementary School, third prize with 343 points; Golden Harvest International School, fourth prize with 342 points; and Oleai Elementary School, fifth prize with 332 points.

A consolation prize of \$500 was each given to Joshua Generation International School, Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School, Agape Christian School, Tanapag Elementary School, Dandan Elementary School, Grace Christian Academy, Garapan Elementary School, Saipan Seventh-Day Adventist School, Kagman Elementary School, William S.

Reyes Elementary School, and Brilliant Star School.

Winners of the 5th My Holiday Greetings to our Visitors Drawing Contest were also announced Thursday. For Rota, they were Sinapalo Elementary School's Seiya Hayashi, first place; Mariette Barcinas, second place; and Vilma Taimanao, third place.

Winners for Tinian were Tinian Elementary School's Kenya Barcinas, first place; Juschery Castro, second place; and Isa Reyes, third place.

Drawing contest winners received \$50, \$30 and \$20, respectively. All participants will also receive gift kits from PDM Promoters.



CLARISSA V. DAVID

San Antonio Elementary School students and staff led by principal James Sablan pose by their Christmas tree shortly after being announced the winner for the 6th Christmas Tree Decorating Contest during the awarding program last Thursday. The group won \$5,000 worth of education tax credit from RNV Construction, one of the sponsors at the annual event organized by PDM Promoters, Inc.

Bill seeks to require cars hauling trailers to have red taillights

A House of Representatives committee is recommending passage of a bill requiring vehicles hauling trailers or similar cargo to have red taillights for road safety.

Under the bill, the red rear lights connected to the trailers should be in sequence to the tail light of the operating vehicle to help prevent accidents, especially in the early mornings and evening hours.

The House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations chaired by Rep. Ralph Demapan (Cov-Saipan) recommends passage of Rep. Ray Tebuteb's (R-Saipan) House Bill 17-132. The House is expected to adopt the committee report in today's session.

The panel said the CNMI Vehicle Code Act needs to be amended in order to protect the safety of vehicle operators, bikers, and pedestrians.

The term "rear lights" is replaced with "taillights" in HB 17-132.

"Tail lights are important because the vehicles that are behind you on the road are able to realize your presence up ahead. Taillights are different from brake lights in that they are on constantly if the lights are on. These lights are very important when driving in fog, rain, early mornings, or at night under any conditions," the committee said. *(Haidee V. Eugenio)*

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Closing Date: Tuesday, December 27, 2011

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9910(a), the Twelfth CNMI State Board of Education hereby gives notice that there will be a Regular Board Meeting on Thursday, December 22, 2011 at 8:30 a.m. at the BOE Conference Room, Susupe, Saipan.

AGENDA

- I. Preliminary**
 - 1) Call to Order
 - 2) Roll Call
 - 3) Adoption of Agenda
 - 4) Adoption of Minutes
 - a) August 25, 2011 Regular Board Meeting
 - b) October 14, 2011 Special Board Meeting
 - c) December 14, 2011 Special Board Meeting
- II. Public Comments**
- III. Reports**
 - 1) Chair
 - 2) Board Committees
 - a) FPA
 - b) ISA
 - c) LIA
 - d) CIP
 - e) SEEP
 - f) SCHOOL REFORM
 - g) AD HOC
 - 3) Student Representative
 - 4) Commissioner of Education
 - a) Financial Status Reports
 - (1) Federal
 - (2) Local
 - b) Other matters
- IV. Unfinished Business**
- V. New Business**
 - 1) Graduation Requirements
 - 2) Instructional Technology Program
 - 3) Wellness Policy Review
 - 4) Restraint and Seclusions of Students: Proposed Policy
 - 5) BOE Policy \$60-20-420 Absenteeism
 - 6) Evaluation of Wellness Policy
 - 7) Mandate of "No External Suspensions"
- VI. Executive Session**
 - 1) Legal Updates
 - 2) Personnel
 - 3) Other matters
- VII. Miscellaneous Matters**
- VIII. Discussion of Agenda for next Board meeting**
- IX. Adjournment**

1 Pursuant to BOE Policy 0415, public comments are limited to 30 minutes. We ask that remarks be limited to 3 minutes each. Everyone is welcomed to submit written comments.
 2 Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Board may vote to meet in executive session at any time.

SOCIETY FOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT – NMI CHAPTER

PRESENTS

HR: Navigating through Change
 Thursday, December 22, 2011
 Charley's Cabaret
 Pacific Islands Club Saipan

Conference Agenda

7:30 – 8:30 am	Registration & Refreshments
8:30 – 8:40 am	Opening Remarks Polly DLG. Masga President, SHRM NMI Chapter Human Resources Manager, Pacific Islands Club Saipan
8:40 – 9:00 am	Ice Breaker #1
9:00 – 10:00 am	USERRA: Knowing is half the battle Employees who serve their country as well as your company are protected by the Uniformed Service Employment and Rights Act (USERRA). This session will help you understand what USERRA is and what actions you must take as an employer. Speaker: David J. Sablan State Chair, Guam-CNMI State Committee Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve U.S. Department of Defense
10:00 – 10:45 am	OJT leads to a J-O-B Statistics show that the unemployment rate in the CNMI has increased over the last couple of years. The Workforce Investment Agency offers an On-The-Job (OJT) training program and offers to subsidize the cost for this training. Learn how your company can take advantage of this opportunity! Speaker: Edith Deleon Guerrero, Executive Director Workforce Investment Agency
10:45 – 11:00 am	15 Minute Break
11:00 – 12:00 pm	E-mail Liability Traps Did you ever feel like you shouldn't have sent that last e-mail? Learn what the most common traps are and how a simple e-mail can actually make you liable. This session will bring awareness to the common e-mail traps and how you can skillfully and legally write and respond to e-mails. Speaker: Michael Ernest, Esq. CNMI Attorney General's Office
12:00 – 1:15 pm	LUNCH
12:30 pm – 12:45 pm	Lunch Briefing: Climb Higher Initiative The Northern Marianas College will be sharing information about its Climb Higher Initiative, which is aimed at expanding access and opportunities for working individuals to earn their degree. In addition to discussing convenient class schedules, financial aid opportunities will be presented. Speaker: Frankie Elipico Joan Torres Northern Marianas College
1:15 – 1:30 pm	Ice Breaker #2
1:30 – 2:30 pm	All my visas and petitions are done. What's next? So you've processed all your H, L, E visas and processed your CW petitions. Now what? Find out what areas you should be mindful of as an employer as we embark on this new journey with U.S. Immigration. Speaker: Bruce Mailman & Maya Kara Mailman & Kara, LLC
2:30 – 3:00 pm	Summary & Closing Remarks Debra T. Camacho Vice President / 2012 President Elect, SHRM NMI Chapter Human Resources Manager, Pacific Trading Company

This is a Full-Day Conference:
 Date: Thursday, December 22, 2011
 Venue: Pacific Islands Club – Charley's Cabaret
 Time: 8:00 am – 3:00 pm (includes materials, refreshments & lunch)
 Cost: \$30 SHRM Members, \$40 Non-SHRM Members

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Sandy Beach Homes officially opens its doors ahead of schedule

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A grand opening celebration on Dec. 16 marked the completion of Sandy Beach Homes, the CNMI's first affordable housing project under the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program, two weeks ahead of schedule and a year after breaking ground in Chalan Kanoa.

Members of the project developer, Sandy Beach Homes LLC, and government officials led the ribbon cutting ceremony for the \$28.2-million affordable housing development touted as an "unprecedented" project and a "monumental milestone" for the Commonwealth.

"It's quite amazing that just one year ago, we were gathered here to break ground on an empty lot with just a few heavy equipment around us. And now, one year and 60 units later, Sandy Beach Homes is ready to open," said Gov. Benigno R. Fitial in his remarks.

Fitial said that Sandy Beach Homes is a "remarkable success story" for the islands and its grand opening nine days before Christmas is "very appropriate."

"The holidays have taken on the tradition of giving, of sharing, and of hope," said Fitial. "Sandy Beach will definitely be a new ray of hope for many families in search of affordable homes in the new year."

Sandy Beach Homes LLC member Juan Carlos Benitez said "it's a shame" that the Commonwealth has not been

taking advantage of the largest and most successful affordable housing program across the nation, as he recounted how they approached the governor and expressed their intent to avail of the LIHTC.

Benitez said Sandy Beach Homes will provide "dignified" housing for low-income families on island.

Sandy Beach Homes has 60 three-bedroom and two-bathroom units on two six-floor buildings that feature energy-efficient design and materials.

Corporate director Joshua Sasamoto of Northern Marianas Housing Program, which administers LIHTC in the Commonwealth, said Sandy Beach is a culmination of a long and hard road for the housing program and a major economic investment that ushered in a new era of affordable housing in the CNMI.

"This project is truly a testament to what we can achieve by working together collaboratively and cohesively," said Michael Sablan, also a member of Sandy Beach Homes LLC.

Sablan, in an interview, disclosed that conflicts and redundancies in government regulations and "bureaucratic snags" were among the issues that they had to deal with in making sure that the project meets its deadline.

"Because we were up against a very tight deadline that had some serious penalties if we don't meet the deadline, that sense of urgency pulled ev-

eryone together," Sablan told *Saipan Tribune*.


Friday's event also featured the presentation of the building keys by Black Micro Corp. senior vice president and general manager Leonard Kaae to

Fitial and Triple J senior vice president Jay Jones, representing his father and Triple J chairman and chief executive officer Bob Jones.

Kaae described the over 310,000 man-hours spent to

build Sandy Beach Homes as "quite a feat." He said the project raises the bar for affordable housing in the CNMI, adding that the real benefit of the project is to improve the quality of life of island residents.

After the presentation of the building keys, Fitial, other government officials, Jones and other members of Sandy Beach Homes LLC led the cutting of the ribbon. Refreshments were served after the program.



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CLARISSA V. DAVID

Community members check out the Sandy Beach Homes in Chalan Kanoa on Friday.

Six take oath as new US citizens

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

For Maria Victoria Camama Saures, acquiring her U.S. citizenship means freedom to travel wherever she wants to go.

Saures, 35, first arrived on Saipan from the Philippines in 2002 and worked as an insurance underwriter for an insurance company. Saures married Alfred Saures in 2004 and, in 2005, became a teacher at Marianas High School.

Mrs. Saures was among the six Filipinos who took their oath to become U.S. citizens on Friday morning in a special naturalization ceremony at the U.S. District Court for the NMI.

"I'm very happy. Now I have freedom to travel with my son and husband," she said.

She acknowledged, however, that being a U.S. citizen also comes with big responsibilities.

Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona administered the oath to the six petitioners—Mrs. Saures, Alexander Buenaventura Madamba, Merlyn Delos Santos Del Rosario, Rhodora Hernandez Cabrera, Rosemarie Albano Kiser, and Celerina Esparas Reyes.

Immigration Services officer Diane Zedde presented



FERDIE DE LA TORRE

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona, left, and Immigration Services officer Diane Zedde, right, pose with five of the six who took their oaths to become U.S. citizens in a special naturalization ceremony on Friday at the district court.

the names of eight petitioners, all Filipinos, but only six were present at the ceremony.

Zedde said that Jozilyn Arciaga Baltazar and Marilou Santos Wallace have valid reasons not to be present and will be in-

cluded in the next naturalization ceremony.

For Madamba, a 45-year-old power inspector at the Commonwealth Utilities Corp., he said he is obviously happy that he is now a U.S. citizen. Mad-

amba first arrived on the island in 1991 and worked as a poker technician. In 1996 he married a Filipino U.S. citizen.

At the ceremony, Chief Judge Manglona welcomed the newest U.S. citizens of "our great country." Manglona said she fully understands the feeling of new U.S. citizens because she too was not born a U.S. citizen.

"I welcome you and congratulate you," Manglona said.

After the six led the pledge of allegiance, a video message from President Barack Obama was played.

"It's an honor and a privilege to call you a fellow citizen of the United States of America. This is now officially your country, your own to protect, to defend and to serve through active and engaged citizenship," Obama said.

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUTS



Happy birthday to Ann Lorelei Pacion! Count your life by smiles, not tears. Count your age by friends, not years. God bless! Forget us not! Yours truly, 'Te Prescy, 'Te Sol, 'Te Lois, and Jo Anne.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Belated greetings to Ignacia "Nang" T. Rogopes, who celebrated her 87th birthday on Dec. 17. Enjoy your special day! We are truly blessed to have you in our lives. We love you! Sending you lots of love from Germany, Tasi, Jo and kids.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



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/s/ RICHARD S. VILLAGOMEZ
Administrator, NMI Retirement Fund

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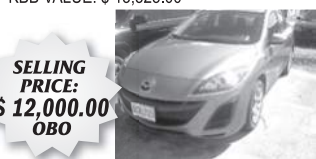
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Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Dec. 19, 2000

PSS-GBI settlement talks in limbo

Public School System officials have opted to discontinue settlement talks with Guerrero Brothers Inc. without the presence of lawyers from both PSS and GBI parties, after exhausting discussions on Tinian over the weekend failed again to yield a compromise agreement on the pending Tinian High School project. Officials from the State Board of Education and the Tinian Legislative Delegation engaged in a heated debate with Mr. Pedro Guerrero of GBI, who reportedly would not budge to PSS' offer that the construction company accept the settlement amount and release the project to PSS.

Child and Family Services unveils priorities

The Child and Family Services has outlined under its 2000-2004 state plan five principal areas of priority to include parenting, volunteerism, response-centered advocacies, system-wide policies and procedures, and staff development and training, in renewed efforts to carry out effective social services reforms to the local community. The five-year state plan, one of many momentous contributions of recently retired Division of Youth Services Director Eloise Furey to the social services sector, began as early as 1996 and was completed based on common concerns raised by community members during the 1999 Family Symposium.

Dec. 19, 2001

Bid loser loses anew

The Office of the Public Auditor has denied the appeal filed by Hawaiian Rock Products Corp., after it lost out in the bidding for the paving of the Susupe Sports Complex parking lot and a road in Capitol Hill. This was the second time HRPC lost out in its appeal in connection with its failed bid for the two projects. The first time around, Division of Procurement and Supply Director Herman S. Sablan denied HRPC's protest that Western Equipment Inc. should not have won the bidding, prompting the firm to elevate its protest to the OPA. In its appeal, HRPC had insisted that Sablan improperly rejected HRPC's claim that it was low bidder. At the same time, HRPC argued that Sablan's decision not to disqualify WEI was contrary to the bid instructions, and that WEI was not a responsible bidder.

Legislature to clip OPM powers

The latest episode in the saga that is called Public Law 12-54 is that the incoming 13th Legislature is now considering amending it to clip the broad powers it gave to the Office of Personnel Management. Plans are now afoot, particularly in the Senate, to have the law amended, despite the fact that it was just passed in June, effectively transferring the OPM from the jurisdiction of the Office of the Governor to the Civil Service Commission. According to Sen. Joaquin G. Adriano, he discussed the matter with Senate legal counsel Tony Cabrera yesterday morning, and Cabrera will soon be coming up with the corrective amendments to the law.

Dec. 19, 2002

\$2M loan for Rota rehab OK'd

The Legislature has moved to authorize another government loan, this time amounting to \$2 million for the rehabilitation of Rota's physical infrastructure that were shattered by supertyphoon Pongsona. The House of Representatives and the Senate unanimously and simultaneously approved the legislative initiative to secure public debt for the repair and replacement of infrastructure systems in the First Senatorial District. The bill's author, Rota Rep. Daniel O. Quitugua, said the \$2 million will be used to speed up the reconstruction of essential public facilities such schools, the hospital and fire and police stations.

Wells Fargo donates toys for Rota kids

Financing company Wells Fargo collected three boxes of toys that will be distributed to Rota children this Christmas, an effort that hopes to uplift the morale of the island's residents during the holidays in light of a natural calamity. Wells Fargo assistant manager and "Toys for Tots" coordinator Norma Sablan handed out the toys to Karidat Executive Director Angie Guerrero and administrative officer Judy Pangelinan yesterday afternoon. Sablan said the toys were collected during the annual Toy for Tots drive undertaken by the company, which began in November. "We hope that we collected enough for everybody." Wells Fargo, a lending company, has been collecting toys for children of needy families for four years now.

Ship dismantling project just suspended, says company exec

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Worldwide Salvage Saipan, the company that had wanted to set up a ship disposal program in the CNMI, said that it is still willing to pursue its investment

in the CNMI "once all things are settled" with its plans.

David Sablan, the company's vice-president for administration, told *Saipan Tribune* in an email that the project has just been suspended. He declined to specify the reason

behind the suspension.

"The company's office in California is still actively pursuing the project. Saipan is still our preferred dismantling location," Sablan said in his email, adding that the project was never cancelled but is suspended for now.

Commonwealth Ports Authority acting board chair Manny Villagomez recently disclosed that Worldwide Salvage Saipan's planned investment at the Saipan seaport may not push through after the company cancelled its lease agreement with CPA.

Sablan admitted that the company lost its lease agreement with CPA for dock space and

warehouse but said they will find and lease other existing warehouses at the port or build one within or outside the port once they are ready to reactivate the project.

He said the company may not need the dock space anyway if it proceeds with a new plan to have a floating dock instead.

It was in late 2009 when Worldwide Salvage Saipan

LLC approached CPA with a proposal to build a \$16 million ship disposal facility in the CNMI. They wanted to tow old ships from California, Texas, and Virginia to the island for dismantling, after which the parts would be sold off island. The CPA board now considers the plan "inactive" after more than a year of waiting for the project to push through.



15TH ANNIVERSARY

Happy anniversary greetings go out to Josephine and Apolinario Valiente, who celebrated 15 years of wedded bliss on Dec. 19! Greetings come from your family and friends.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Two allegedly beat up man outside Garapan bar

Two drunk men allegedly beat up another man and threw rocks at his vehicle outside a bar in Garapan in the early morning hours of Dec. 1.

Kevin I. Esteves, 21, and Bradley DLR. Palacios, 20, were arrested shortly after the incident. They were booked and detained at the Department of Corrections and were later released.

Police officers said the victim, John Hamilton, sustained a swollen and bruised right eye and lip.

The driver side window of Hamilton's Nissan pickup truck was damaged. Three to five rocks, each about the size of a baseball, were found on the floor and passenger seat of the

truck.

Police served Esteves with an arrest warrant on Thursday night in Garapan on charges of assault, assault and battery, criminal mischief, disturbing the peace, and minor consuming alcohol. Hi bail was set at \$500 cash. If he fails to post bail, preliminary hearing will be on Dec. 28 at 9am.

It was not immediately clear whether Palacios has also been served with a warrant.

Police reports state that two police officers responded to Ace Pool Bar in Garapan on Dec. 1 at 1:10am after receiving a call about a disturbance.

Police said that Palacios initially claimed that Hamilton assaulted his friend, Esteves.

One police officer, however, spotted Hamilton sitting on the second floor of the bar. The victim was covering his injured right eye.

The officers then learned during an interview with Hamilton that Esteves and Palacios beat him up after he refused to shake hands with them. Esteves and Palacios allegedly punched and kicked the victim.

A witness tried to stop the suspects from further beating Hamilton. The suspects, however, continued and one of them, Esteves, allegedly told Palacios that they would kill Hamilton.

Hamilton managed to break free and ran to the rear part of the building where he hid.

Esteves and Palacios then threw rocks at the victim's pickup, shattering a window, police said. *(Ferdie de la Torre)*



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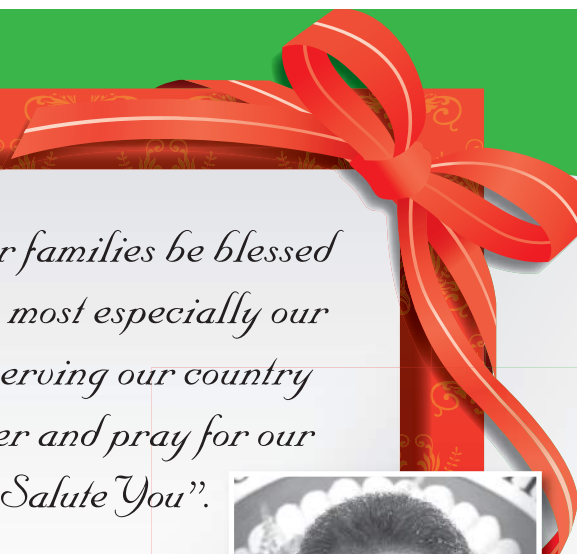


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During this Holiday Season, may your families be blessed with the tidings and joys of a safe holiday, most especially our CNMI sons and daughters in uniform serving our country throughout the world and let us remember and pray for our fallen heroes and their families, "We Salute You".

From our families to yours, Merry Christmas and have a Prosperous New Year!

CONGRESSMAN ANTONIO P. SABLAN,
FAMILIES AND STAFF.



Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP 96950Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR

MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Who gets jobless benefits?

The fight in Congress over whether to extend the temporary payroll tax cut has focused in part on the unrelated issues that House Republicans have tied to the measure—most notably the proposed Keystone XL pipeline—and in part on how to make up for the lost revenue. Democrats want to cover the estimated \$121-billion tab mainly by raising taxes on the wealthy; Republicans want to cut spending, mainly by reducing federal workers and freezing the pay of those who remain. In a nod to the Democrats' populism, however, the House GOP has also proposed to claw back the unemployment benefits paid to people with income of \$1 million or more. It might sound like common sense, but it's bad policy.

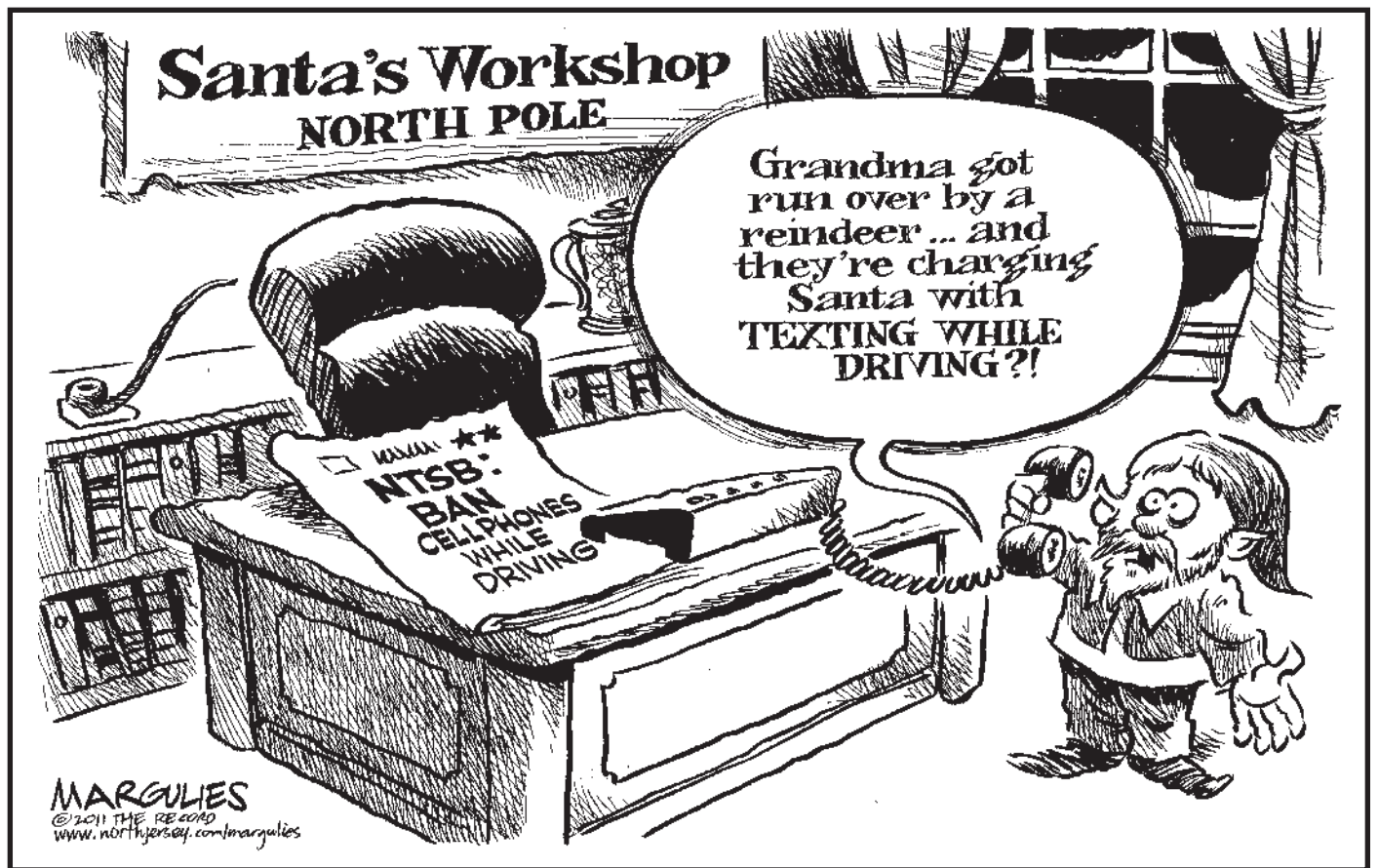
Unemployment insurance is financed primarily by taxes that employers pay, the cost of which is typically passed on to workers in the form of lower salaries. States determine how much to pay laid-off workers (the average is a little less than half their previous weekly wage, up to a cap of \$450 a week in California) and how long to provide benefits (26 weeks is the norm). The federal government offers extra weeks of benefits during periods of high unemployment. If the demand for benefits outstrips the supply of tax dollars, Washington kicks in money from the general fund.

The federal government now provides up to 73 weeks of extended benefits in California and other states with high unemployment rates, but those benefits are set to expire Jan. 1. The House payroll-tax bill would renew only some of the extra benefits, providing 30 to 43 weeks. It also would set new restrictions on who could receive any state or federal aid, including a requirement that recipients have a high school diploma or the equivalent. And it would impose a 100 percent tax on the benefits collected by people with million-dollar incomes.

Lawmakers shouldn't roll back unemployment benefits when there are still so many more idled workers than job openings. Doing so would put another hurdle in the struggling economy's path. In addition, the proposed restrictions interfere with states' ability to determine who should be eligible for benefits, an issue that has always been within their purview. More important, unemployment programs are insurance, not welfare. Employers of all stripes—and, by extension, their employees—pay in on the same terms, in anticipation of equal benefits.

In that sense, the unemployment insurance program is like Social Security. It is not designed to reallocate wealth, but to provide a basic level of protection against financial risk. Workers who pay into the program, directly or indirectly, should be entitled to its benefits, regardless of how much income or how little education they have.

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Christmas is time to be grateful!

In a few days we will all be celebrating the most wonderful holiday season of the year—Christmas. Children will expect Santa to bring gifts, adults will express special warm greetings to each other, and all of us will strive to be jolly! But Christmas is also the time when we reflect on the past year and express gratitude for all that we possess.

This morning instead of expressing only my own thoughts, let me share some thoughts of others who have expressed their feelings of gratitude in this blessed moment of the year. Hopefully these inspiring thoughts will help all of us to feel gratitude.

Let us never forget that life is only as precious as we make it. It consists not only of material goods but mainly of love and feelings for others. And coupled with that is hope for a better tomorrow. I wish to share the following essay for it expresses the thoughts we too often forget:

"Isn't it funny, in a sort of way, how often we get so mired down in every day depressions like bills, job responsibilities and such until we forget just how lucky we are to be alive?"

"It can take something as simple as a shock, a severe car wreck or as in my recent experience, serious food poisoning, to realize just how lucky we are simply to be alive!"

"Every day we seem to have something that ticks us off or makes us obsessed about how we fell short or how others fell short in our accomplishments. Or perhaps we complain about what we do not have or the amount that we do have. We seem to have less than the other guys, fewer luxuries, fewer toys, less money, less influence, etc., etc., whine and complain. No matter just how much we may actually have, it never seems to be enough."

"Well here is a word of advice from silly old me...If you do not have the money, toys, the luxuries...be HAPPY anyway! Because when you stop and think about it...if you had all those things and your wife, husband, child, or parents had only 24 hours to live, what would you do?"

"Would you trade all of your possessions in the world for a few extra hours? Or would you hold on to them as the most important things in the world? After all, possessions are just things! What makes you breathe, think, cry, laugh, and exist is LIFE!"

"I get caught up in 'He who has the most toys...etc. etc.' too. But each lesson that brings me into perspective seems to be increasingly severe. So I have made a decision to concentrate on the individual joys in each individual minute. Flowers, Sunshine, Love of my family...Breathing. Yes, I am going to concentrate on being GRATEFUL!"—Author unknown

"Life is a gift, and it offers us the privilege, opportunity, and responsibility to give something back by becoming more."—Anthony Robbins

"Maxim for life: You get treated in life the way you teach people to treat you."—Wayne Dyer

Here is a short story with a moral...being thankful. It will bring tears to your eyes as it did to mine.

"A blind boy sat on the steps of a building with a hat by his feet. He held a sign which said: 'I am blind, please help.'"

There were only a few coins in the hat. A man was walking by. He took a few coins from his pocket and dropped them into the hat. He

By ANTHONY PELLEGRINO

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Pellegrino is a longtime businessman in the CNMI and is a former president of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce.



then took the sign, turned it around, and wrote some words. He put the sign back so that everyone who walked by would see the new words. Soon the hat began to fill up. A lot more people were giving money to the blind boy. That afternoon the man who changed the sign came by to see how things were. The boy recognized his footsteps and asked, "Were you the one who changed my sign this morning? What did you write?"

The man said, "I only wrote the truth. I said what you said but in a different way. I wrote: 'Today is a beautiful day but I cannot see it.'"

Both signs told people that the boy was blind. But the first sign simply said the boy was blind. The second sign told people that they were so lucky that they were not blind. Should we be surprised that the second sign was more effective?

Moral: Be thankful for what you have. Be creative. Be innovative. Think differently and positively. When life gives you a 100 reasons to cry, show life that you have 1,000 reasons to smile. Face your past without regret. Handle your present with confidence. Prepare for the future without fear. Keep the faith and drop the fear. The most beautiful thing to see is a person smiling... and even more beautiful, knows that you are the reason behind it!"—Muslimah

"Christmas waves a magic wand over this world, and behold everything is softer and more beautiful."—Norman Vincent Peale

"I wish we could put some of the Christmas spirit in jars and open a jar of it every month."—Harlan Miller

"Christmas gift suggestions:

To your enemy, forgiveness.

To an opponent, tolerance.

To a friend, your heart.

To a customer, service.

To all, charity.

To every child, a good example.

To yourself, respect."—Oren Miller

We all have something to be grateful. Look around us and see how others are doing. Walk through any hospital ward, drive through some sections of Saipan, read about the devastation going on in many countries, and view pictures of homeless families. Then think, "There, but for the grace of God, go I."

Yes, times are tough and dollars are scarce and the economy is in turmoil, but we still have each other. Is there more? As we hug each other let us whisper into each other's ear, "God bless us all."

From my home to yours and to everybody, I offer you a very Merry Christmas! And please *smile*! It is one of the nicest presents to share and easy to carry. Have a great week.

A somber message to retirees

If you are a CNMI retiree you should be very concerned that your Retirement Fund may be broke within two years if the administration and the Legislature don't act to save your pension. There is a very real possibility you may have to live your remaining years without the pension the government entered into a contract with you. Have you wondered just how long that might be? For those interested, read on to get an estimate.

This issue came to my mind as I considered the rapid diminishing resources of the Retirement Fund and the number of aging DBP retirees dependent upon their pensions when balanced against the approximate number of years of their remaining life after the close out of the Fund, which experts expect will occur in about 24 months or around 2014, if not sooner.

If you are curious about your remaining life span without a pension for yourself or a loved one, the following is something to give serious consideration. If you don't want to know—stop here and read something else.

People responsible for calculating long term retirement payments use a very important statistical database to assist in the management of the financial resources placed in their trust as well as to determine future financial “payout” requirements, such as, for example, monthly payments to retirees.

These data are known as period life tables, which present what would happen to a hypothetical cohort (which is a group of people that share particular characteristics) if experienced throughout the group's entire life of mortality conditions of a specific period of time. The period life table may be characterized as being a “snapshot” of current mortality experience.

Simply stated, and selecting a single hypothetical individual for purposes of citing an example, if Jose were to retire at age 65 and barring any fatal accident or catastrophic disease, statistics will tell us the average number of years of life remaining for Jose and all the others in his cohort will be 15.2 years or to age 80.2 years. Remember, it's an estimate.

Life tables for the population in the Northern Marianas are calculated combining data for both the indigenous and non-indigenous resident population. The data presented herein are the latest available until the results of the census of 2010 are analyzed. While foreign workers are included, most tend to be under the age of 40. For my purpose, the data presented can be considered indicative of that which is expected to prevail and thus useful. As ages increase there are fewer foreign workers in each cohort series and the data become more reliable on the increasing age range scale.

The most frequently used life table statistic is the life expectancy, which is the average number of years of life remaining for persons who have attained a given age. For example, if your age is within the following age cohorts your estimated remaining life expectancy has been calculated as follows:

MALES AT AGE	EST. YEARS REMAINING	EST. YEAR OF DEMISE*
40	36.5	2047
45	31.8	2043
50	27.3	2038
55	22.9	2034
60	18.9	2030
65	15.2	2026
70	12.0	2023
75	9.3	2020
80	6.9	2018

FEMALES AT AGE	EST. YEARS REMAINING	EST. YEAR OF DEMISE*
40	40.9	2052
45	36.1	2047
50	31.5	2042
55	27.0	2038
60	22.7	2034
65	18.7	2030
70	15.1	2026
75	11.8	2023
80	8.9	2020

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
* Fractions less than a full year not calculated. Years have been rounded.

As might be expected, data differ considerably as a result of ethnicity and gender. Females generally live longer than males. Some ethnicities have a shorter lifespan than others.

For those who are now retired—select your age range from the data table presented (or as close to it as possible) and from the opposite column locate the estimated number of years remaining as the life expectancy for that particular age. Deduct two years as representing the last remaining years of your pension payments as

we have been told will occur if current diminishing conditions continue. Then multiply that figure by your annual retirement annuity and you will arrive at a figure that represents your theoretical “lost” retirement income for the rest of your life after about 24 months or around the year 2014.

If your retirement income is your only source of income you are destined for the welfare register of poverty.

While a few elected officials appear to be trying to assist retirees in their effort to salvage the Fund, far too many seem not to care. If attitudes and policies don't change on the part of some within the central government as well as the Legislature and their respective contractual, legal, and moral financial obligation to you as a retiree—if your elected representatives, don't stop their endless talking as a substitute for a meaningful productive solution to the mess they have created it's going to be “sorry about that” because your pension will not be available as your future years unfold.

So, here's another problem. Since the older a person becomes the more personal medical attention becomes a costly fact of life, thus greater pressure on health providers and CHC and, of course, the NMI government's sponsored health and life insurance program. For more on serious potential problems with this issue see the *Saipan Tribune* archives of Dec. 6, 2011, titled: “Message for retirees: What happens to the retiree's Group Health and Life Insurance plan when the Fund goes broke?”

Don't forget it was the government's decision to opt out of participating in the U.S. Social Security program, selecting instead the CNMI's own “locally” controlled and administered retirement program (which it was known would be outside U.S. law and oversight). Friends, do you suppose that at the time certain lawmakers saw where they could arrange for obscenely selfish and exorbitantly generous pensions for themselves. Ask Fund officials how many retired recipients over the years were paid annual pensions of \$100,000 each or more. Ask how many were paid between \$75,000 and \$95,000 per year.

As a former Fund administrator pointed out in an article several years ago (Dec. 7, 2004), Fund records indicated the highest pension released was \$150,000 a year to a retiree as a former member of the Judiciary. That amount of money is equal to paying six retirees annual pensions of \$25,000 each. Several years ago an administrator of the Fund was quoted in a local paper (Dec. 7, 2004) that combined pensions for six retirees totaled \$670,000 per year, which averages about \$111,666 per year per person. Compare that with

Felis noche buena!

Gi mamamaila' na Dameño i selebrasion Noche Buena, kompliaños i Niño Jesus ni numae' hit taihinekog na esperansa, konfiansa, inañooghu yan sumen ma'ug na bendision. Tapan adiseha dinuebu gi hilu sumen nama-gof na felisitation ginen i korasonta.

Un' ha'ane ni maseñala, deste antigu na tiempu, para tana' oppan i mauleg na sensian kilisyanu yan inafamauleg espesiatmente gi halom familiata mismu.

Mafañagu i lahen Yuus gi un' poblen liyañg ga'ga'. Pot esso na todú i tiempu hana' o'oppan i para ta trata i mamoble yan man-namase' parehu yan hita mismu. Ekuñgog este na finaisenña para maug' na bendision gi famaguon miyu. Fanague linala' espirituat pot para u fan siña umañkla sasyan niha gi katkuet chubaskon lina'la'.

Tapan man-nae' mit gracias pot todú i bendisionta siha. Ta tayuyute lokue' ayu i esta mangaige gi naftan yan ayu siakassu man-matai gi nuebu na sakan.

Sumen namagof na ha'ane piot guine siha nas islas 'nai i familia man-arikonose ya man-adiseha dinuebu gi hilu' satton na dinaña. Maseha guaha dididi' chinatsagamu, namagof hau nu todus i bendisionmu na sakan. Fan gagau lokue motmut bendision para i otu sakan. Felis Noche Buena para todus!

Estague' na haane lokue' 'nai mafattu mahalañgta ni man-mofu na yan ayu lokue' i man-gaige gi chagu'. Ta diseseha felis na ha'anen gupot para siha yan familian niha. Tapan adiseha di nuebu para i 2012 na sakan ya puede u soda' hit mas yanú ke mampos barañka na finaposta pagu na sakan. Esperansa i fitme na pogse' natibu. Na fitme mas ya in' geden te'chuñg ennau na pogse' para i sakan 2012!

Hu hahassu lokue' un' echu Noche Buena 'nai hu bisita si biahu. Estaba i amku' man-afililitu guihan gi feggún antes. Man-ñiñge'yu' dispues ha plantayu' senahu. Ha faisenyú nu i mañeluhu dispues sige ha ulus iluhu. Era, sumugu'yu' un' ratu gi karerahu para i Misan Gayu.

Hulie' gi un' bandan mataña na tutuhu lago'ña. Hu pañot ales sa' hu komprende signifkasion ayu na misin lagu'. Ha echa-yu' bendision dispues 'nai humanau-yu' para i gima' Yuus. Ti hanae'yu' regalu sa' sumen poble si biahu. Lau katgaduyu' sumen guaguan na balutan bendision ginen un' sinantusan na amku'. Tat mas ke bendision ginen sainata.

Gi otu eskalera, in' hassu manma-estoriaye hit pot si Santa Claus ni mafattu yan manadan regalu gi echu pueñgen Noche Buena? Ai na manñge estoria pot si Santa Clau ni muna' fan guifeyu' kumu

By WILLIAM H. STEWART

Special to the Saipan Tribune

William H. Stewart is an economist, historian, and military cartographer.



your pension. Now do you understand why the Social Security program was not wanted at the time a retirement program for the NMI was being considered. Don't get “screwed” twice.

For those readers connected to the Internet, the following site displays a calculator that estimates your life expectancy. It was developed by Northwestern Mutual Life. It's interesting that there are only 13 questions. Yet, they can predict how long you're likely to live. Just be honest with your answers. Go to: <http://media.nmfn.com/tnetwork/lifespan>

For still another source for estimating life expectancy, Google the Social Security Life Tables. Find your age and the corresponding years remaining of life opposite your age. Then determine how many years you will be without a pension and the lost amount over your remaining lifespan.

If things don't change and the government continues on its present course, the iceberg is in front of you as a retiree and there are no lifeboats on the horizon. So think about this. It's not only the retiree who will suffer when their individual pension is no longer available; their entire family will be saddened and in some measure adversely impacted. The retiree's surviving parents, siblings, aunts and uncles—many family members will feel the loss and the strain. Add to this the monetary loss to the economy by reduced consumer expenditures as well as also the hidden increased cost to the government required to fill the breach by increasing government social and welfare programs for the new island poor. I wonder if the politicians have thought about the above as a “multiplier meltdown.”

Editor's note: The author, as a forensic economist, often utilizes life expectancy data, inflation and discount rates related to assignments within the judicial process. www.cnmi-guide.com/phm/esc/#forensic. He has more than 50 years experience with various economic development issues both internationally and within the NMI. Stewart has published more than 300 articles concerning various island issues, most of which are in Saipan Tribune archives.

By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.

Special to the Saipan Tribune

DelRosario is a regular contributor to the Saipan Tribune's Opinion Section.



eskuelante antes pot regalu siha.

Lau ni unabes 'nai mattu si Santa Claus. Esta hu sospecha kau pot taya' chimineha gi gima' mame na ha letket sumugu kada sakan. Kase 'nai estayu' echu tautau 'nai hu komprende na estorian famaguon si San Nicolas para umana' gatbu mas i haanen gupot siha.

Dispues guaha muna' lagse' mas i estorian Santa Claus na pot taya' ais (snow) guine, ayu mina siempre u halom gi Puetton Tanapag ya umau'udai gi un' dañkulun galaide. Kada malofanyu' hu ñgelu' kau gaige galaide'ña. Puru batkon yan boten katga yan para Mañagaha mangaige gi oriya. Ai hoñggiyon na estoria.

Ilegña lokue' i amku na si Santa Claus ayu hananae' regalo i man-mauleg na famaguon. Siempre 'an man-maigu' hau u fattu antes de 'las dose ya u pega i paketi siha gi papa' troñkun Christmas. Dispues hu sosogne i taya' troñkun Christmas gi salan mame na ti mattu si Santa Claus. De dios mihu. Hu dagau tuayahu!

Lau i mas tai achaigua yan mañge' na regalu i nina'en i Saina ni un' faisen gi namase' na tinayuyotmu. Nina' fatuye hau sa' satton hau nu guiya. Ti diniñgu hau sa' u faisen para in' hamyu gi kare-ramu mona. Un' onrague' kumu Yuosmu ya unnae'gue' fehman agradesimiento sa' ha mattitgue' pot hagu yan i mañgilisyanu siha gi enteru i tanu'.






Esta misen lagomu 'nai un' konsidera todus i pasuña piot si nana-ña as Santa Maria ni sumuñgun todú mattiru yan matrata kontra i lahiña lau tai nina' siña gi halom man-enemigu. Pot sinsiyu hine-ñgemu mina hinassu hau satton na regalu piot gi oran didog na nessidatmu. Fan nae' mit gracias. Felis Noche Buena!

Bumakasiosion dos umasagua giya Roma 'nai matai i lahe. Masañge i asagua na siña mahafot asaguaña guihe 'sino u kone' tatte. Tres dias dispues mafaisen hafa disisiona. Ilegña i prohima na malagu'gue' na u mahafot asaguaña giya Roma. Lau ha hu-ñgog pot un' tautau ni matai ya luma'la' tatte gi mina tres dias. Ha disidi para ukone' tatte asaguaña pot no la'la tatte ya u sina-pet talu. Ai de dios!

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
				
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲ 88° ▼ 76°	▲ 87° ▼ 76°	▲ 87° ▼ 76°	▲ 87° ▼ 76°	▲ 87° ▼ 76°

Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Thundershowers	▲ 85 ▼ 78
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲ 85 ▼ 77
Yap	Mostly Cloudy	▲ 88 ▼ 79
Chuuk	Showers	▲ 85 ▼ 79
Pohnpei	Showers	▲ 85 ▼ 79
Kosrae	Showers	▲ 85 ▼ 79
Majuro	Showers	▲ 85 ▼ 80

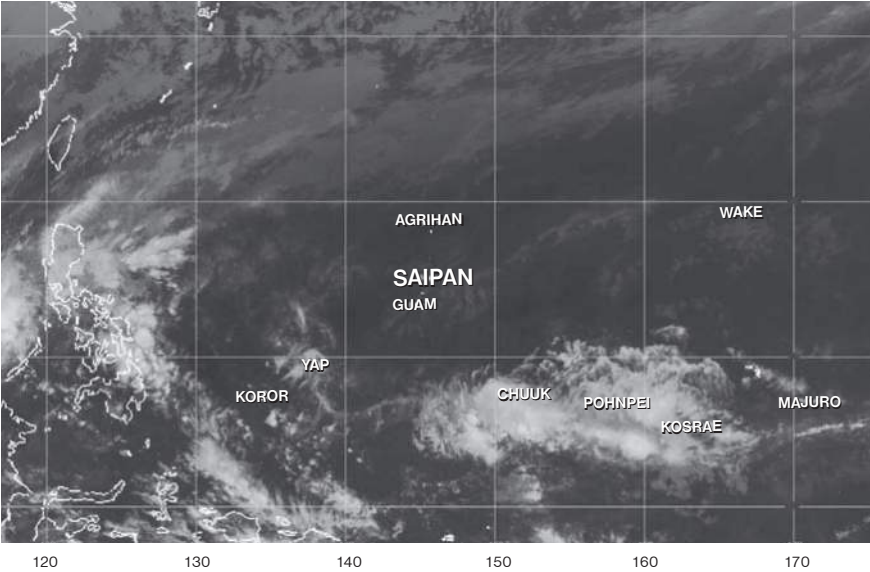
Around The Globe

Auckland	Partly Cloudy	▲ 67 ▼ 57
Beijing	Sunny	▲ 35 ▼ 18
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	▲ 64 ▼ 61
Honolulu	Windy	▲ 80 ▼ 71
London	Showers	▲ 48 ▼ 39
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	▲ 59 ▼ 43
Manila	Partly Cloudy	▲ 87 ▼ 76
Melbourne	Showers	▲ 70 ▼ 56
Miami	Partly Cloudy	▲ 78 ▼ 71
New York	Mostly Cloudy	▲ 47 ▼ 42
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	▲ 51 ▼ 41
Paris	Showers	▲ 45 ▼ 35
Pusan	Mostly Sunny	▲ 47 ▼ 31
Rome	Mostly Sunny	▲ 53 ▼ 38
Salem	Partly Cloudy	▲ 44 ▼ 31
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	▲ 61 ▼ 45
Seoul	Sunny	▲ 35 ▼ 25
Tokyo	Sunny	▲ 51 ▼ 36
Washington, DC	Mostly Cloudy	▲ 51 ▼ 43

Tides

Saipan Harbor				
2:01 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.4 Feet	
7:42 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.6 Feet	
2:13 PM	Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet	
9:27 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.2 Feet	

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2011
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A shear line extends southwestward from 25N156E to beyond 130E at 17N. Cloudiness and patchy rain are found along and north of this boundary to beyond 25N. Low-level convergence is producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms southwest of Koror, west of a line from 7N132E to EQ137E. Trade-wind convergence is generating scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms within 150 miles of a line from 5N147E to 7N153E to 6N160E to 3N165E. This area includes Chuuk, Pohnpei and Kosrae.

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:37 AM	5:51 PM
Tuesday	6:37 AM	5:51 PM
Wednesday	6:38 AM	5:52 PM
Thursday	6:38 AM	5:52 PM
Friday	6:39 AM	5:53 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	12:43 AM	12:50 PM
Tuesday	1:41 AM	1:38 PM
Wednesday	2:41 AM	2:28 PM
Thursday	3:43 AM	3:24 PM
Friday	4:47 AM	4:23 PM

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- PICTURES**
 - ISLAND SNAPSHOTS Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
 - BIRTHDAY GREETINGS A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
 - BUSINESS Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
 - SAMUT SARI Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
 - TRAVELOGUE Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.
- ANNOUNCEMENTS**
 - COMMUNITY BRIEFS

- Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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- For pictures:**
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 - Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
 - Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
 - Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
 - For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.
- For announcements:**
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when),

- the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 6, 2011

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)				ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)			
C05062	2:10am	2:40am	1, 5	C05064	5:15am	5:45am	1, 5
SAIPAN (SPN)-ROTA (ROP)				ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN (SPN)			
C05064	4:15am	4:50am	1, 5	C05062	3:10am	3:45am	1, 5
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
C05070	4:15am	5:45am	1, 5 via ROP	C05062	2:10am	3:45am	1, 5 via ROP
C05070	4:35am	5:25am	2, 3, 4, 6, 7	C05069	2:45am	3:35am	2, 3, 4, 6, 7
C05068	8:25am	9:15am	Daily	C05071	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
C05074	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7	C05073	10:05am	10:55am	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C05076	3:10pm	4:00pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7	C05075	1:40pm	2:30pm	1, 4, 5, 7
C05078	6:50pm	7:40pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7	C05077	5:30pm	6:20pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C05078	7:00pm	7:50pm	3, 6	C05077	5:40pm	6:30pm	3, 6
C05072	9:55pm	10:45pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7	C05079	8:35pm	9:25pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C05072	10:05pm	10:55pm	3, 6	C05079	8:45pm	9:35pm	3, 6
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
DL287	6:00am	8:35am	Daily	DL298	10:25am	3:00pm	Daily
DL297	4:35pm	7:20pm	Daily	DL288	8:40pm	1:15am+1	Daily
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)				SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN			
OZ606	2:10am	6:00am	1	OZ603	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ606	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	OZ605	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ604	3:20pm	7:10pm	Daily	OZ605	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)				BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN			
OZ608	3:35am	7:05am	4, 7	OZ607	9:00pm	2:20am+1	3, 6
SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)				GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN			
3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6	3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)				SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN			
3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7	3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
OZ606/701	2:10am	11:15am	1 via ICN	OZ704/603	12:10am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
OZ606/701	2:40am	11:15am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN	DL172/288	8:00am	1:15am+1	Daily via NRT
C05070/191	4:35am	9:45am	3, 6 via GUM	C0190/5077	10:55am	6:30pm	3, 6 via GUM
DL287/173	6:00am	10:25pm	Daily via NRT	C0190/5079	10:55am	9:35pm	3, 6 via GUM
C05068/183	8:25am	9:25pm	2, 5 via GUM	OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
C05068/183	8:25am	9:40pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM	OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
C05076/183	3:10pm	9:25pm	2, 5 via GUM	PR110/C05071	10:15pm	7:50am+1	1, 5, 7 via GUM
C05076/183	3:10pm	9:40pm	1, 4, 7 via GUM	C0192/5071	10:25pm	7:50am+1	2, 5 via GUM-Palau
C05076/193	3:10pm	11:00pm	2, 5 via GUM-Palau	C0184/5071	11:10pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
OZ604/703	3:20pm	11:00pm	Daily via ICN	C0184/5071	11:59pm	7:50am+1	2, 5 via GUM
C05072/PR111	9:55pm	7:50am+1	1, 5, 7 via GUM				
C05072/PR111	10:05pm	7:50am+1	3, 6 via GUM				
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)				HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN			
OZ606/721	2:10am	12:00pm	1 via ICN	OZ724/603	12:30am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
OZ606/721	2:40am	12:00pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN	OZ750/603	1:10am	2:20pm	1, 2, 4, 6 via ICN
C05076/179	3:10pm	10:25pm	1, 5 via GUM	OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ604/723	3:20pm	10:30pm	Daily via ICN	OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ604/749	3:20pm	11:00pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via ICN	C0180/5071	11:15pm	7:50am+1	1, 5 via GUM
LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 5K: FlyGuam; 3U: Sichuan Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CO: Continental; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana				ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The <i>Saipan Tribune</i> is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)			

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency	Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota				FRE 115	13:00	13:10	Daily
FRE 100	7:30	8:00	Daily	FRE 117	14:30	14:40	Daily
Rota-Saipan				FRE 119	16:00	16:10	Daily
FRE 100	8:20	8:50	Daily	FRE 121	16:40	16:50	Daily
Guam-Rota				FRE 123	17:40	17:50	Daily
FRE 300	17:00	17:30	Daily	FRE 125	18:30	18:40	Daily
Rota-Saipan							
FRE 1750	17:50	18:20	Daily				
Saipan-Rota				Tinian-Saipan			
FRE 200	9:30	10:00	Daily	FRE 102	7:05	7:15	Daily
Rota-Guam				FRE 104	7:50	8:00	Daily
FRE 400	10:20	10:45	Daily	FRE 106	8:20	8:30	Daily
Saipan-Rota				FRE 108	9:00	9:10	Daily
FRE 400	18:55	19:25	Daily	FRE 110	10:00	10:10	Daily
Rota-Guam				FRE 112	11:05	11:15	Daily
FRE 400	19:40	20:10	Daily	FRE 114	12:00	12:10	Daily
Saipan-Tinian				FRE 116	13:30	13:40	Daily
FRE 101	6:45	6:55	Daily	FRE 118	14:50	15:00	Daily
FRE 103	7:30	7:40	Daily	FRE 120	16:20	16:30	Daily
FRE 105	8:00	8:10	Daily	FRE 122	17:00	17:10	Daily
FRE 107	8:40	8:50	Daily	FRE 124	18:05	18:15	Daily
FRE 109	9:10	9:20	Daily	FRE 126	18:50	19:00	Daily
FRE 111	10:45	10:55	Daily				



NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Letters to the Editor

Hurtful actions of Congress

John DelRosario was right when he said, in his column in the *Saipan Tribune* on Dec. 16, that the “feds sure know how to hurt a guy.” That isn’t quite what he said, but that was the gist of it. The feds—specifically the U.S. Congress—hurt not only the CNMI but also Guam this week, taking adverse action against outlying U.S. entities without any real understanding of either the entities or the impact of Congress’ actions.

First, a congressional committee, about to vote to bring to the floor of Congress CNMI non-voting representative Gregorio Kilili Sablan’s House Resolution 1466, took the measure off the calendar, thus killing any chance of its passing the House before the end of the year. HR 1466 would have given a number of deserving foreign workers in the CNMI legal status that the feds’ takeover of CNMI control of its own immigration had failed to do. Fortunately, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service had jumped in and formalized an offer of temporary relief in line with Kilili’s bill before the withdrawal was announced, so that the fate of the affected foreign workers is not lost altogether—there’s now a year or so to work on possible alternate solutions.

There was speculation that H.R. might not have won full House approval. In any case, there was still approval to gain from the U.S. Sen-

Let it be!

I am writing about H.R. 1466 for immediate relatives of U.S. citizens and FSM citizens. I would like to share my thoughts and opinions about this bill.

First of all, the people are really living in hardships right now and having financial problems. We the people should help each other and let’s try to bring the economy back up rather than to keep putting contract workers down or hurting their feelings.

Second of all, Governor Fitial needs to wake up and smell the coffee cause he is only mentioning that Filipinos are a burden to CNMI. What about the Chinese, Koreans and the Bangladeshis? We the people of the CNMI know that these Filipinos came to Saipan to work and follow the rules and regulations and to pay all their taxes. They are not a burden to the CNMI because if it wasn’t for them there will be no buildings or hotels in the CNMI.

Third of all, Governor Fitial should know where his wife came from, from the Philippines.

So just let Kilili Sablan do his job and do yours and please try to make the CNMI a better place and let’s stop all these hatred and words that are so painful to the contract workers.

Governor Fitial, is there any favoritism going on within the CNMI? If there is, please let it stop. Also, you should open your eyes even more because you don’t know who really is the burden of the CNMI for the people of Saipan. So just let this bill pass because are you willing to help U.S. citizens pay for their spouses’ green card? I don’t think you can, so please let it be. And lastly, to Mr. Kilili Sablan, I am really proud of you for all the hard work that you are doing for your people. Thank you and *si yu’us maase*.

Melva Tadeo

Kagman 3, Saipan

A brutal show

While on vacation here, I went to watch the Trench Warz Supremacy XV and I could not believe that children were allowed to also watch the fight! It is an extremely brutal show, and in my opinion it is too violent for children. What kind of example is it for them? What will they learn from watching a demonstration of mixed martial arts? To me, it just teaches children how to be bullies in school, and who knows, all throughout their adult lives. There should be discretion when one buys a fight ticket. It may be just a sport, but not for youngsters. Just like a movie is just a movie, but children aren’t allowed to watch adult rated movies, nor are they allowed to watch R-rated ones.

Another issue I had was that there were no ID checks at the door. Yes, there was security, but as far as preventing underage drinking...NONE! To the right of where I sat in the VIP section, teenagers were purchasing alcohol! How do I know? I saw my nephew order vodka with Monster, no ID was asked of him, and I had to step in and take the drink away from him. I was so surprised to hear that a police officer who is also a Trench Tech fighter was not aware of this situation. I would think that this “underage drinking prevention” program, especially with “3D prevention” program going on this holiday season, he would have been on top of this.

Other than this, I had an awesome time at the fight. I just hope and wish, when I come back again, these issues would be attended to and hopefully resolved.

Chris DLG. Maclay

Ontario, Canada

ate, as well. So while Kilili and the workers both received a temporary setback, both retained their dignity, their reputations—and hope.

The second action has much more severe repercussions. The U.S. House of Representatives passed a defense bill this week that deleted over \$400 million allocated to Guam in support of the transfer of U.S. troops to Guam from Okinawa. Contractors, businesses, hotels had all been poised to take advantage of the money that was predicted to flow into Guam with the military buildup. Indeed, Guam’s hopes were high that the influx of funds would give its floundering economy the boost it needed to revive. However, given the Re-

Untrustworthy

This is an open letter to Ben Fitial and his group who oppose H.R. 1466. Has anyone on Capital Hill who is against H.R. 1466 sat down and talked with the people, their constituents—U.S. citizens—who will be negatively affected by their desire to kill this bill? I believe a short five-minute conversation with these folks would open their eyes and hearts to the fact that they will destroy *families* and that they need to back off on their opposition to H. R.1466.

To quote Elaine Whitmore, if Mr. Fitial had been so adamantly opposed to an economy based on foreign labor, why did he, as a VP for a large garment company, and his colleagues hop in bed with Mr. DeLay and Mr. Abramoff to lobby for maintaining the status quo? Her comment was right on point. It’s a point I have been hammering away at in all my letters to the editor. I wonder how Fitial would feel toward H.R. 1466 if his wife did not have a green card or U.S. citizenship. Would he be in favor of her having to return to her country of origin?

Ms. Whitmore forgot to mention that during the time Uncle Ben was working for the garment industry, he was also firmly in bed with garment owners. This attitude then gave Ben and Froilan the confidence to basically screw government policy or ignore advice from the feds and bring in thousands more garment factory workers. The increase in foreign labor was all about more money for garment owners. Seeing that Abramoff has admitted in his book that he was the king of bribes and kickbacks, it makes you wonder how much of that \$5 million the CNMI paid to Abramoff to hold off the fed takeover made its way back to the pockets of certain CNMI politicians.

It has been painfully apparent for a very long time that Fitial and his gang are not to be trusted on anything. This latest series of Fitial dramas reinforces that. If Fitial told me it was raining, I would open a window to verify. That is how bad his reputation is at this point. Fitial and his followers continue to make immigrants the enemy and I fail to see his logic in regards to how they will have such a bad effect on the CNMI. In making them the enemy, he is drawing

publican Congress’ budget-cutting stance, the likelihood that those funds will be restored any time soon is dim indeed. Though Guam’s non-voting representative fought diligently against the cuts, she was unsuccessful. Thus, Guam has been left empty-handed, its representative powerless.

To look on the bright side, at least the CNMI didn’t come off as badly as did Guam.

Ruth L. Tighe

Tanapag, Saipan

attention away from the fact that he and his ilk are responsible for the CNMI’s woes.

Immigrants have made the CNMI what it is today; same goes for the entire United States of America. We are nation of immigrants. Jaime was on the fence regarding my previous letters to the editor for my usage of Uncle in regards to Fitial. If I had called him an Uncle Tom, now that could be construed to be racist. But then again, Fitial *is* acting like a good ol’ boy Uncle Tom in his attitude toward immigrants in the CNMI. It’s OK that they are here to clean his house, change his baby’s diapers, maintain his lawn, serve his food in a restaurant, and massage his back at 2am, but God forbid they should actually be treated as equals or with any type of dignity. Fitial is out of touch with the common people of the CNMI. He is isolated from the community.

Speaking of isolation, what is the deal with Fitial’s need for bodyguards? Is he in fear for his life? Maybe he is, in his mind anyway. Maybe he feels that way for being such a tool for private interests and screwing the people of the CNMI. I know there are governors in the states who don’t have bodyguards. Things that make you go hmmm...

Paul H. Beebe

Spokane, Washington

Thank you

The Kagman High School Refalewasch and Chamorro Clubs would like to extend a big warm “thank you, *ghilisow*, and *si yuus maase* to Coca Cola for donating a banner and soda, PDI for providing transportation, and TDI, KKP for sponsoring our Christmas caroling. Your contribution to our club is greatly appreciated. Happy holidays and be safe. Again, thank you.

Josie Kaipat

Saipan

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Joeten fashion show highlights store's new arrivals

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Twenty-six models of all ages showed off what they've got at the first ever Joeten Christmas Fashion Show held at the Joeten Department Store in Susupe Saturday night.

The models wore outfits from five different collections: casual wear, beach, athletic wear, pajamas, little black dress, and Christmas wear.

Joeten marketing manager Frannie T. Demapan said the featured collections were from the Joeten Department Store and its affiliate companies, Athlete's Foot, All Star Sporting Goods, and Borderline.

"We try to feature a variety of different types of clothing just to let people know exactly what we have here in the store," she told *Saipan Tribune*.

Demapan said the fashion show, which was free to the public, was put together in three weeks to thank the community for the support it has given to Joeten.

She said Joeten Department Store has a lot of

new arrivals that are perfect for holiday shopping.

"We will have a new shipment in the spring as well so we might feature a spring fashion show, too," added Demapan.

Sponsors for the fashion show included Revlon Cosmetics for the makeup; Salon de Fleur located next to Big Dipper for the girls' makeup; Eydie Uy of Makeover Salon for the teens' makeup; Marianas Management Corp. for the stage; "and to the many volunteers who helped me backstage for putting everything together."

"Happy holidays from Joeten. Thank you for supporting us for over 60 years. We truly appreciate you and your families and we hope you have a great holiday season," said Demapan.



Business

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Research firm boosts holiday outlook
NEW YORK (AP)—With about week until Christmas, optimism is rising that holiday sales will be better than originally forecast. Still, the season isn't expected to end up being stellar. ShopperTrak, a Chicago-based research firm, announced Friday it's upgrading its holiday sales forecast, a day after the nation's largest retail group boosted its outlook. ShopperTrak now believes that sales for the November and December period combined will rise 3.7 percent compared with the same period a year ago. That's up from the original 3 percent growth forecast issued in September when the economy's recovery looked more uncertain. The 3.7 percent forecast is still below the 4.1 percent growth registered in the year-ago period, according to ShopperTrak's measure.

Moody's downgrades Belgium's debt by 2 notches
NEW YORK (AP)—Moody's Investors Services on Friday downgraded Belgium's credit rating by two notches, citing strains on eurozone countries as they try to finance their heavy debt loads amid the regional financial crisis. The ratings agency cut Belgium's local- and foreign-currency government bond ratings to "Aa3" from Aa1," with a negative outlook. The ratings remain investment grade. Moody's said the downgrade comes as soaring borrowing costs strain the finances of heavily indebted countries that use the euro, like Belgium. The strains are also making it difficult for Belgium to reduce debt and rein in spending.

Senate OKs payroll tax cut, huge spending bill
WASHINGTON (AP)—The Senate voted Saturday to temporarily avert a Jan. 1 payroll tax increase and benefit cutoff for the long-time unemployed, forcing a reluctant President Barack Obama to make an election-year choice between unions and environmentalists over whether to build an oil pipeline through the heart of the country. The action set up a Monday vote in the House, where many GOP lawmakers told their leaders they are ready to reject the measure. With the still-reeling economy serving as a backdrop, the Senate's 89-10 vote belied a tortuous battle between Democrats and Republicans that produced the compromise two-month extension of the expiring tax breaks and jobless benefits and forestalled cuts in doctors' Medicare reimbursements.



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation



**PUBLIC NOTICE OF CUC'S
PROPOSED WATER & WASTEWATER RATE INCREASE**

This is a notice of a formal request to increase the rates, fees and/or charges of the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), ("rate case"), and of a public hearing related to it. The CNMI Public Utilities Commission (Commission) regulates the CUC pursuant to Public Law 15-35, as amended.

On October 10, 2011, CUC filed a petition and supporting evidence with the Commission to raise its water and wastewater rates, and some electric fees and charges, as rate case Docket 12-01.

CUC says it is currently operating at a substantial deficit, cannot borrow money, relies entirely on the revenues from its customers and federal grants, and says that the proposed rate increases are critical in order for the company to maintain financial health. Additionally, CUC is required by statute and a US District Court Stipulated Order to achieve "full cost recovery." This means that CUC's revenues must fully cover the cost of providing service to its ratepayers. CUC's costs include the costs of maintenance, repair, materials and supplies, labor, replacement of water and sewer pipes, pumping and treatment facilities, vehicles, meters and other equipment. CUC's filing supports a conclusion that the water and wastewater rates have been, and currently are, set substantially below the true cost of service.

CUC says that its rate increase request is primarily due to reasons that are beyond CUC's control, including the above matters and overall rates that have been below cost. CUC requests that the Commission adopt the proposed rate increases, **to become effective February 14, 2012, or thirty days after the date of the hearing,** as determined by the Commission, as follows:

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION PROPOSED RATE DESIGN				
SCENARIO: 11 12 08 Application Notice of Intent				
Current Effective Feb 14 2012				
WATER Rates				
ESTIMATED PURCHASED POWER CHARGE				
All Customer Classes -- Per 1,000 Gallons				
NOTE: subject to revision based on changes to Electric rates				
METERED Customers				
Monthly Service Fee				
5/8"		\$ 10.85	\$	10.85
1"		12.67		12.67
1 1/2"		15.91		15.91
2"		25.34		25.34
3"		53.35		53.35
4"		99.55		99.55
6"		135.75		135.75
8"		189.10		189.10
10"		280.55		280.55
12"		362.00		362.00
Volume Rate Per 1,000 Gal				
Residential				
Commercial	3,000	1.51		1.99
	3,001	4.34		2.60
	15,001	5.43		3.32
	30,001	6.34		4.23
	60,001	7.24		5.13
Multi-Family				
	3,000	1.51		2.80
	3,001	4.34		2.80
	15,001	5.43		2.80
	30,001	6.34		2.80
	60,001	7.24		2.80
CUC				
Government	Above	54.30		54.30
Public School System	Above	54.30		44.30
UNMETERED Customers -- Fixed Charge				
Residential		40.00		54.00
Multi-Family		40.00		54.00
Commercial		204.00		275.40
CUC		204.00		275.40
Government		204.00		275.40
Public School System		204.00		275.40
NOTE: Unmetered and Flat rates phased out upon completion of meter change-out program				

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION PROPOSED RATE DESIGN				
SCENARIO: 11 12 08 Application Notice of Intent				
Current Effective Feb 14 2012				
WASTEWATER Rates				
ESTIMATED PURCHASED POWER CHARGE				
All Customer Classes -- Per 1,000 Gallons				
NOTE: subject to revision based on changes to Electric rates				
METERED/UNMETERED Customers				
Residential				
Multi-Family		5.00		12.21
Monthly Service Fee		1.00		1.25
Vol Rate/1,000 Gal	6,001	3.13		3.94
Commercial				
Monthly Service Fee		9.24		11.64
Vol Rate/1,000 Gal	6,001	3.00		3.78
		3.13		3.94
CUC				
Government	Above	65.00		85.68
Public School System	Above	65.00		85.68
NOTE: Unmetered and Flat rates phased out upon completion of meter change-out program				

Notably, CUC seeks to implement three new customer classes, one for Multi Family customers, one for CUC, and one for the Public School System. CUC also seeks to implement a Purchased Power Charge that will be adjusted whenever CUC adjusts its Levelized Energy Adjustment Clause (LEAC) and/or its Monthly Fuel Adjustment Clause (MFAC) fuel charge. A Purchased Power Charge means that CUC will charge a fee per 1,000 gallons of water or wastewater which represents the cost to CUC of providing the electric power CUC used to generate that water. The Purchased Power Charge is in addition to the new base rate amount, and is \$2.11 for water, and \$2.68 for wastewater.

CUC seeks to change the following fees and charges:

Fee or charge	Current level	Proposed level
1. Sewer Dumping Charge	\$ - 0 -	\$50.00
2. Inspection/Testing Charge	\$ - 0 -	\$50.00

CUC also seeks adoption of the following regulatory changes: adopt a requirement for the primary account holder to be the owner or lessee of the property (revising NMIAC 50-10-005); adopt a requirement for corporate officers of a customer to be personally liable for utility bills (revising NMIAC 50-10-005); adopt a provision to allow CUC to disconnect without notice after receiving two NSF checks in a 12-month period (new Regulation); and reenact NMIAC 50-10-101 and NMIAC 50-30-305 with changes suggested by the CNMI Law Revision. CUC would also like to separate billing regulations from service regulations by reenacting those regulations in separate parts or adding to NMIAC 50-40. Finally, CUC seeks changes to the Public Utilities Commission's contract protocol.

CUC further seeks approval to conduct a non-rate revenue analysis; requests approval of its Security Services contract; seeks input on engaging experts to study CUC's capacity in the context of renewable energy generation on CUC's grid; seeks approval of three changes to its Interim Financial Plan; seeks establishment of a Net Metering Tariff; and seeks input on its government receivable issue, including a proposed Memorandum of Understanding with the central government and Public School System.

Two petitions submitted by Senator Juan Ayuyu on the topic of CUC providing non-potable or agricultural water on the island of Rota will be considered.

The Commission will conduct a public hearing on January 20, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. at the Retirement Fund Building Conference Room, Capitol Hill, Saipan, to receive evidence, argument, discussion and public comment on the above regulatory matter. The Commission will later conduct a special business meeting to consider and make decisions regarding matters considered at the public hearing.

A set of the CUC rate case petitions, and the written testimony and the exhibits, is available for download from the internet as follows:

1. Open Internet Explorer.
2. Type ftp.economists.com. Do not type "http://" or anything else, just ftp.economists.com.
3. Click on "Page" -- upper right corner of Internet Explorer window.
4. Click on "Open FTP Site in Windows Explorer".
5. An entry window will pop up. Enter user name: "Cucftp"; and password: "Cucsaiapan1". Both are case-sensitive.

A written copy of all petition materials will also be available for inspection at the following places: CUC Admin Office: Third Floor, Joeten Dandan Building; CUC Tinian Office; CUC Rota Office.



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation



**PUBLIC NOTICE OF PROPOSED INCREASE OF ELECTRIC BASE RATES
AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON JANUARY 20, 2012 AT 10:00 A.M.**

The CNMI Public Utilities Commission (Commission) regulates the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC). The Commission requires CUC to file a rate case when it seeks to adjust its base rates. In this filing, CUC requested an emergency change to its electric base rates.

Accordingly, on December 8, 2011, CUC filed an emergency petition with the Commission to raise its electric base rates, under Docket 09-1.

CUC's rate increase request is primarily due to reasons that are beyond CUC's control. CUC is required by CNMI law and the Stipulated Orders, entered in United States v. CUC and CNMI, 08-0051 (D.N.M.I.), to achieve "full cost recovery." This means that CUC's revenues must fully cover the cost of providing service to its ratepayers. This includes all costs of production, operation, and maintenance required to provide electric, water and sewer services to consumers. The rate increases CUC asks for are critical in order for it to attain financial health and comply with CNMI law and the Stipulated Orders. CUC seeks this emergency base rate increase to recover revenues lost from decreased loads, and additional expenses from retirement fund increases, CDA payments and increased costs from the approval of Telesource Change Order No. 5. In addition, CUC has asked the Commission to consider making a change to the timing and calculation of the Levelized Energy Adjustment Clause "LEAC."

In its amended petition, CUC requested that the Commission adopt an increase to its electric base rates, **to become effective February 1, 2012, or thirty days after the public hearing.** The proposed electric base rate increases are as follows:

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION PROPOSED ELECTRIC BASE RATE DESIGN				
E.1 Residential E.2 Commercial E.3 Government E.4 Residential Lifetime				
CURRENT ELECTRIC RATES -- BASE CHARGE				
Monthly Customer Chg				
	\$ 6.52	\$ 9.06	\$ 9.06	\$ 5.50
Per kWh:				
-	0.0190	0.1020	0.1070	0.0160
501	0.0780	0.1020	0.1070	0.0750
1,001	0.1020	0.1020	0.1070	0.1020
2,001	0.1500	0.1020	0.1070	0.1500
PROPOSED ELECTRIC RATES -- BASE CHARGE				
Monthly Customer Chg				
	\$ 9.49	\$ 12.99	\$ 12.99	\$ 8.03
Per kWh:				
-	0.0270	0.1460	0.1530	0.0230
501	0.1120	0.1460	0.1530	0.1120
1,001	0.1460	0.1460	0.1530	0.1460
2,001	0.2150	0.1460	0.1530	0.2150

CUC notes that the average residential ratepayer uses approximately 500 kWh per month. The proposed rate adjustment will increase the average residential ratepayer's monthly electric bill by approximately \$6.87. For the lowest users, those customers who use approximately 250 kWh per month, the proposed rate increase will be \$4.87. Higher volume residential and commercial users will experience greater increases.

The Commission will conduct a public hearing on January 20, 2012, at 10:00 A.M., at the Retirement Fund Building Conference Room, located in the Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, to receive evidence, argument, discussion and public comment on the above regulatory matter.

After the public hearing, the Commission may conduct a special business meeting to consider and make decisions regarding matters considered at the public hearing.

A set of the CUC rate case petitions, and the written testimony and the exhibits, is available for download from the internet as follows:

1. Open Internet Explorer.
2. Type ftp.economists.com. Do not type "http://" or anything else, just ftp.economists.com.
3. Click on "Page" -- upper right corner of Internet Explorer window.
4. Click on "Open FTP Site in Windows Explorer".
5. An entry window will pop up. Enter user name: "Cucftp"; and password: "Cucsaiapan1". Both are case-sensitive.

A written copy of all petition materials will also be available for inspection at the following places: CUC Admin Office: Third Floor, Joeten Dandan Building; CUC Tinian Office; CUC Rota Office.

Nation

Killing of bin Laden voted top news story of 2011

NEW YORK (AP)—The killing of Osama bin Laden during a raid by Navy SEALs on his hideout in Pakistan was the top news story of 2011, followed by Japan's earthquake/tsunami/meltdown disaster, according to The Associated Press' annual poll of U.S. editors and news directors.

The death of bin Laden, the al-Qaida leader who masterminded the Sept. 11 terror attacks, received 128 first-place votes out of 247 ballots cast for the top 10 stories. The Japan disaster was next, with 60 first-place votes. Placing third were the Arab Spring uprisings that rocked North Africa and the Middle East, while the European Union's financial turmoil was No. 4.

The international flavor of these top stories contrasted with last year's voting—when the Gulf of Mexico oil spill was the top story, President Barack Obama's health care overhaul was No. 2, and the U.S. mid-term elections were No. 3.

Here are 2011's top 10 stories, in order:

OSAMA BIN LADEN'S DEATH: He'd been the world's most-wanted terrorist for nearly a decade, ever since a team of

his al-Qaida followers carried out the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. In May, the long and often-frustrating manhunt ended with a nighttime assault by a helicopter-borne special operations squad on his compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan. Bin Laden was shot dead by one of the raiders, and within hours his body was buried at sea.

JAPAN'S TRIPLE DISASTER: A 9.0-magnitude earthquake off Japan's northeast coast in March unleashed a tsunami that devastated scores of communities, leaving nearly 20,000 people dead or missing and wreaking an estimated \$218 billion in damage. The tsunami triggered the worst nuclear crisis since Chernobyl after waves knocked out the cooling system at a nuclear power plant, causing it to spew radiation that turned up in local produce. About 100,000 people evacuated from the area have not returned to their homes.

ARAB SPRING: It began with demonstrations in Tunisia that rapidly toppled the longtime strongman. Spreading like a wildfire, the Arab Spring protests sparked a revolution in Egypt that ousted Hosni Mubarak, fueled a civil war



In this May 1, 2011 file image released by the White House and digitally altered by the source to diffuse the paper in front of Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden, along with members of the national security team, receive an update on the mission against Osama bin Laden in the Situation Room of the White House in Washington.

in Libya that climaxed with Moammar Gadhafi's death, and fomented a bloody uprising in Syria against the Assad regime. Bahrain and Yemen also experienced major protests and unrest.

EU FISCAL CRISIS: The European Union was wracked by relentless fiscal turmoil. In

Greece, austerity measures triggered strikes, protests and riots, while Italy's economic woes toppled Premier Silvio Berlusconi. France and Germany led urgent efforts to ease the debt crisis; Britain balked at proposed changes.

US ECONOMY: By some measures, the U.S. economy gained strength as the year progressed. Hiring picked up a bit, consumers were spending more, and the unemployment rate finally dipped below 9 percent. But millions of Americans remained buffeted by foreclosures, joblessness and benefit cutbacks, and investors were on edge monitoring the chain of fiscal crises in Europe.

PENN STATE SEX ABUSE SCANDAL: One of America's most storied college football

programs was tarnished in a scandal that prompted the firing of Hall of Fame football coach Joe Paterno. One of his former assistants, Jerry Sandusky, was accused of sexually molesting 10 boys; two senior Penn State officials were charged with perjury; and the longtime president was ousted. Paterno wasn't charged, but expressed regret he didn't do more after being told there was a problem.

GADHAFI TOPPLED IN LIBYA: After nearly 42 years of mercurial and often brutal rule, Moammar Gadhafi was toppled by his own people. Anti-government protests escalated into an eight-month rebellion, backed by NATO bombing, that shattered his regime, and Gadhafi finally was tracked down and killed in the fishing

village where he was born.

FISCAL SHOWDOWNS IN CONGRESS: Partisan divisions in Congress led to several showdowns on fiscal issues. A fight over the debt ceiling prompted Standard & Poor's to strip the U.S. of its AAA credit rating. Later, the so-called "supercommittee" failed to agree on a deficit-reduction package of at least \$1.2 trillion—potentially triggering automatic spending cuts of that amount starting in 2013.

OCCUPY WALL STREET PROTESTS: It began Sept. 17 with a protest at a New York City park near Wall Street, and within weeks spread to scores of communities across the U.S. and abroad. The movement depicted itself as leaderless and shied away from specific demands, but succeeded in airing its complaint that the richest 1 percent of Americans benefit at the expense of the rest. As winter approached, local police dismantled several of the protest encampments.

GABRIELLE GIFFORDS SHOT: The popular third-term congresswoman from Arizona suffered a severe brain injury when she and 18 other people were shot by a gunman as she met with constituents outside a Tucson supermarket in January. Six people died, and Giffords' painstaking recovery is still in progress.

Among the news events falling just short of the Top 10 were the death of Apple Inc. co-founder Steve Jobs, Hurricane Irene, the devastating series of tornados across Midwest and Southeastern U.S., and the repeal of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy that barred gays from serving openly in U.S. military.

Woman set afire in elevator of her NYC building

NEW YORK (AP)—A woman burned to death in the elevator of her Brooklyn apartment building Saturday afternoon after a man ambushed her, sprayed her with liquid and set her afire with a Molotov cocktail, police said.

The unidentified man was waiting for the woman, who was in her 60s, when the elevator doors opened to her floor of the Prospect Heights building. The man sprayed her with an accelerant and set her on fire, New York City police spokesman Paul Browne said.

"It was apparent he knew she was on the elevator," he said.

The brutal attack happened shortly after 4 p.m., lasted about a minute and was recorded by two video cameras, including one inside the small elevator.

As the elevator doors opened to the fifth floor where the woman's apartment was located, the assailant stepped in and sprayed

the woman, Browne said.

The woman, who had grocery bags in her arms, turned about 180 degrees and then crouched in an attempt to protect herself, he said. But the man sprayed her directly in the face and continued to spray her "sort of methodically" over her head and parts of her body as the bags draped off her arms. She turned around and retreated to the back of the elevator.

At some point, Browne said, the suspect then pulled out a barbecue-style lighter, used it to ignite a rag in a bottle and then waited for a few seconds before using the flames to set her afire, causing smoke to fill the elevator.

The man backed out as the woman fell to the floor of the elevator, Browne said, and seemed to pause before tossing the bottle inside the elevator onto the woman.

Browne would not comment on the motive in the killing, but said the suspect knew his victim. Police did not identify the woman pending notification of relatives.

Investigators believe the suspect fled down the stairs of the building, he said.

Police released still images of the man Saturday night, showing him in a black jacket, wearing what appear to be surgical gloves and with a white dust mask perched atop his head like a pair of sunglasses. He is holding what appears to be a canister with a nozzle and spraying as he steps into the elevator.

Neighbors reported a fire in the building, unaware that the woman, who police declined to identify, was burning to death in the elevator.

Residents were evacuated from the six-story building for hours Saturday night.



This Saturday, Dec. 17, 2011 surveillance photo provided by the New York (City) Police Dept. shows a suspect wanted in connection with a homicide, in the Brooklyn borough of New York.

ACROSS THE NATION

9-year-old NYC boy chokes in school cafeteria

NEW YORK (AP)—Family members and a witness say a New York City fourth grader choked on meatballs during lunch earlier this month while school cafeteria workers stood by. The boy later died. The New York Post reported Saturday that 9-year-old Jonathan Jewth fell to the ground during lunch Dec. 5 at Public School 47 in the Bronx. He was unconscious before help arrived. A parent at the school, Andrea Perez, told the newspaper she saw the boy choking but cafeteria workers did nothing. She said at one point they yelled at him to put his fingers down his throat. She said she did not know how to resuscitate the boy so she called 911 and started screaming for help. Another parent tried to help the boy, the newspaper reported.

Employee shoots 4 others, self at LA-area office

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A man who shot four people, killing two, at a utility office east of Los Angeles before turning the gun on himself was a 48-year-old company employee from Southern California, authorities said Saturday. Investigators identified the shooter as Andre Turner of Norco in Riverside County and ruled that his death was a suicide, Los Angeles County coroner's Lt. Larry

Dietz told The Associated Press. The two other men killed were Henry Serrano, 56, of Walnut and Robert Scott Lindsay, 53, of Chino Hills, coroner and company officials said. Both men were managers in the information technology department and longtime Southern California Edison employees.

Manning's sexual orientation is raised at hearing

FORT MEADE, Md. (AP)—The young Army intelligence specialist accused of leaking government secrets spent his 24th birthday in court Saturday as his lawyers argued his status as a gay soldier before the repeal of "don't ask, don't tell" played an important role in his actions. Lawyers for Pfc. Bradley Manning began laying out a defense to show that his struggles in an environment hostile to homosexuality contributed to mental and emotional problems that should have barred him from having access to sensitive material. Manning is accused of leaking hundreds of thousands of sensitive items to the anti-secrecy group WikiLeaks, including Iraq and Afghanistan war logs, State Department cables and a military video of a 2007 American helicopter attack in Iraq that killed 11 men, including a Reuters news photographer and his driver.

Asia

200-plus missing as migrant ship sinks off Indonesia isle

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—Rescuers searched for survivors Sunday after a wooden ship carrying about 250 asylum seekers, many of them from the Middle East, sank off Indonesia's main island of Java. Only 33 people have been rescued so far, an official said.

Four fishing boats searched for the more than 200 missing passengers who were attempting to reach Australia, but bad weather and 4-meter- (13-foot-) high waves were hampering the efforts, said Lt. Alwi Mudzakir, a maritime police official who was heading the rescue operation.

"We fear that a large number of victims will not be rescued," he said.

China villagers in revolt demand dead man's body

BEIJING (AP)—Thousands of residents of a southern Chinese village staging a rare revolt are calling on authorities to return the body of a local representative whose death in police custody helped sparked the rebellion.

The villagers, who have driven local authorities from the area, gathered at a square outside a local temple Saturday to shout slogans calling for the return of farmland they say has been sold to developers without their consent and to urge the central government to intervene, said resident Qin Zhuan, a woman contacted by phone. "We have been wronged," the villagers chanted, according to Qin. "Long live the central government! Strike down corrupt officials."

The villagers will also hold a march in the village to demand

Police blamed Saturday's accident on overloading, telling Indonesia's official Antara news agency that the vessel appeared to have been carrying more than twice its capacity.

Mudzakir said some of those who were rescued told authorities that they were determined to seek asylum to Australia.

He said about 250 asylum seekers—mostly from Afghanistan, but also from Iraq, Iran and Turkey—were taken by four buses from Indonesia's capital, Jakarta, on Thursday by an unidentified group. The group promised to get the asylum seekers to Christmas Island, an Australian territory in the Indian Ocean, without legal immigra-

tion documents.

One of the survivors, Esmat Adine, told Antara that the ship started rocking from side to side, triggering widespread panic.

Because people were so tightly packed, they had nowhere to go, said the 24-year-old Afghan migrant.

"That made the boat even more unstable, and eventually it sank," he said. Adine said that he and others survived by clinging to parts of the broken vessel until they were picked up by local fishermen.

He estimated that more than 40 children were on the ship. Mudzakir said that two children and a woman were among the 33 who had been rescued.

all right, there's no need to worry about food," Huang said.

Calls to police in Shanwei, the city that oversees Wukan village, rang unanswered.

Protests against official misconduct are increasingly common in fast-developing China, but Wukan residents have taken things a step further, erecting barricades a week ago to keep police out and posing a challenge to the authoritarian government. On a near-daily basis, thousands of villagers gather for rallies, shouting slogans for the return of their land and pumping their fists in the air.

But signs of a split in the community have emerged in the last couple of days. Protesters estimate that dozens of villagers have joined government supporters who were offering food in exchange for their support.

that police return the body of Xue Jinbo, a village representative who died in police custody last Sunday, she said.

Police have set up checkpoints around Wukan, a village of 20,000 that has for months been the site of simmering protests, and have blocked transportation of food in a bid to choke off the weeklong revolt. Since last weekend, villagers have kept police out with barricades made of tree trunks.

Young men are guarding the barricades and patrolling the village roads, sometimes armed with wooden clubs, said Huang Jinqi, another resident reached by phone. Food is smuggled in by other routes, he added.

"Some people from neighboring villages have been bringing us vegetables and rice using the small roads so we are currently

attack came as thousands of unionized employees were preparing to return to the Grasberg mine in the mountains of Papua province following a three-month strike that has crippled production at the sprawling operation. Though the 8,000 striking workers were supposed to be back on the job Saturday after management agreed to a 37 percent pay hike, union spokesman Juli Parorrongan said plans were pushed back so the two sides could iron out last minute details. It was not immediately clear who was behind Saturday's attack or what the motive may have been.

Crew stabilizes leaky Russian ship near Antarctica

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)—The 32 crew members aboard a leaking Russian fishing ship near Antarctica have made progress stabilizing the vessel, and a plane was scheduled to drop them supplies Saturday. Rescue ships, hampered by heavy sea ice, were still several days away. The vessel Sparta hit underwater ice Friday, tearing a 1-foot (30-centimeter) hole in the hull and causing it to list at 13 degrees. Maritime New Zealand, which is coordinating rescue attempts, said Saturday that the crew had pumped water from the vessel overnight and moved cargo around, making the boat safer and more stable. Crew members who had donned emergency suits and boarded life rafts were now back aboard the Sparta, the agency said.

World

Egypt military uses heavy hand in crushing protests

CAIRO (AP)—Troops pulled down yet is likely a sign that the generals who took power after the February ouster of Hosni Mubarak are confident that the Egyptian public is on its side after two rounds of widely acclaimed parliament elections, that Islamist parties winning the vote will stay out of the fight while pro-democracy protesters become more isolated.

Unfazed by TV cameras catching every move, Egypt's military took a dramatically heavier hand Saturday to crush protests against its rule in nearly 48 hours of continuous fighting in Egypt's capital that has left more than 300 in-

jured and nine dead, many of them shot to death.

The most sustained crack-down yet is likely a sign that the generals who took power after the February ouster of Hosni Mubarak are confident that the Egyptian public is on its side after two rounds of widely acclaimed parliament elections, that Islamist parties winning the vote will stay out of the fight while pro-democracy protesters become more isolated.

Still, the generals risk turning more Egyptians against them, especially from outrage over the abuse of women. Photos and video posted online showed troops pulling up the shirt of one woman protester in a conservative headscarf, leaving her half-naked as they dragged her in the street.

"Do they think this is manly?" Toqa Nosseir, a 19-year old student, said of the attacks on women. "Where is the dignity?"

Nosseir joined the protest over her parents' objections because she couldn't tolerate the clashes she had seen.

"No one can approve or accept what is happening here," she said. "The military council wants to silence all criticism. They want to hold on power ... I will not accept this humiliation just for the sake of stability."

Nearby in Tahrir, protesters held up newspapers with the image of the half-stripped woman on the front page to passing cars, shouting sarcastically, "This is the army that is protecting us!"



An Egyptian protester throws a stone toward soldiers, unseen, as a building burns during clashes near Tahrir Square, in Cairo, Egypt, Saturday, Dec. 17, 2011.

Historic visit to Libya by Pentagon chief Panetta

TRIPOLI, Libya (AP)—U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said "the torch of freedom" has passed to the Libyan people and he pledged during a historic visit Saturday to Tripoli that the United States will do all it can to help the country move toward democracy.

But he and his Libyan hosts acknowledged the threat of Islamic militants gaining ground in this period of political uncertainty following the ouster and death of longtime dictator Moammar Gadhafi.

Panetta and Libyan leaders identified challenges for the government now forming, including how to gain control of the militias that overthrew

Gadhafi during an eight-month civil war.

"This will be a long and difficult transition, but I have confidence that you will succeed in realizing the dream of a representative government," Panetta said during a news conference with Prime Minister Abdurrahim el-Keib.

"The torch of freedom that has passed throughout the centuries and now passes from nation to nation in the Middle East and North Africa burns brightly here in Libya. May it light your way to a future of peace, prosperity and freedom," Panetta said.

While his visit was brief, Panetta made history as the first U.S. Pentagon chief to set foot

on Libyan soil.

He evoked U.S. history, too, with a visit to the cemetery presumed to hold remains of U.S. sailors killed in Tripoli harbor in 1804. Their deaths were memorialized in the famous "shores of Tripoli" line in the Marine Corps hymn.

Both Panetta and al-Keeb expressed confidence that the fledgling government will be able to reach out to the militias and bring them together.

"We know how serious this issue is," said al-Keeb. "We realize it is not matter of saying 'OK, put down your arms, go back to work or do what you want to do.' We realize that there are lots of things that we need to be organized."

Brazil judge allows dam construction to continue

SAO PAULO (AP)—A Brazilian judge has revoked a decision that had halted some work on a massive hydroelectric dam in the Amazon jungle.

Federal judge Carlos Eduardo Martins halted construction on the \$11-billion, 11,000-megawatt Belo Monte Dam in September, saying it would harm fishing on the Xingu River, which feeds the Amazon.

But on Friday, he ruled that construction could proceed because the Norte Energia consortium that is building the dam showed that the flow of

the river would not be altered in a way that would harm the habitat of fish.

The judge's ruling has been posted on the court's website.

When completed, the dam would be the world's third largest behind China's Three Gorges dam and the Itaipu, which straddles the border of Brazil and Paraguay.

The government has said it will be a source of clean, renewable energy, and that it will help fuel the country's economy.

But environmentalists and indigenous groups say the dam would devastate wildlife

and the livelihoods of 40,000 people who live in the area to be flooded.

Celebrities including British rock star Sting, film director James Cameron and actress Sigourney Weaver have joined activists in lobbying against the dam.

When Cameron participated in protests against the project in Brazil last year, he compared the anti-dam struggle by indigenous people to the plot of his film "Avatar," which depicts a natives of a planet fighting to protect their homeland from plans to extract its resources.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Bus accident in west Nepal kills 15 people

KATMANDU, Nepal (AP)—A speeding bus has skidded off a mountain road in western Nepal, killing 15 people. Govindmani Bhurtel, Chief Government Administrator of Baitadi district, says the driver lost control and the bus rolled off the highway Saturday night near Srikedar village, about 250 miles (400 kilometers) west of the capital, Katmandu. He says six people were injured in the accident and were taken to hospitals.

9 killed in gas explosion at Chinese coal mine

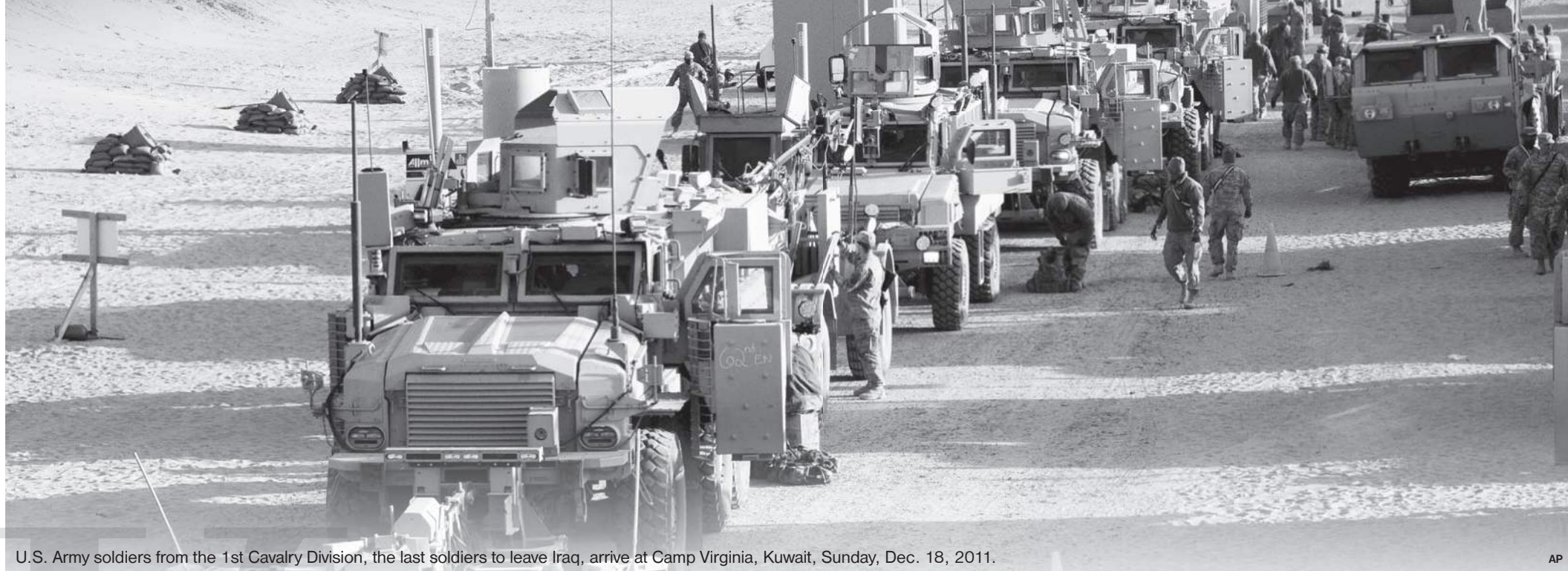
BEIJING (AP)—A gas explosion at a mine in central China has killed nine workers. The accident happened Saturday afternoon at a mine in Hunan province's Sandu township. A Hunan work safety official says all nine workers underground at the time were confirmed dead. The official, surnamed Zhang, says the cause of the explosion is being investigated. He says the mine is privately run.

Gunmen attack chopper near Indonesia Freeport mine

TIMIKA, Indonesia (AP)—Gunmen attacked a helicopter carrying 29 workers and family members from Freeport-McMoRan's trouble-plagued gold and copper mine in eastern Indonesian, wounding one person Saturday, officials said. The

Focus

Last US troops elated to leave as war finally ends



U.S. Army soldiers from the 1st Cavalry Division, the last soldiers to leave Iraq, arrive at Camp Virginia, Kuwait, Sunday, Dec. 18, 2011.

AP

By REBECCA SANTANA
ASSOCIATED PRESS

KHABARI CROSSING, Kuwait (AP)—The last U.S. soldiers rolled out of Iraq across the border into neighboring Kuwait at daybreak Sunday, whooping, fist bumping and hugging each other in a burst of joy and relief. Their convoy's exit marked the end of a bitterly divisive war that raged for nearly nine years and left Iraq shattered, with troubling questions lingering over whether the Arab nation will remain a steadfast U.S. ally.

The mission cost nearly 4,500 American and well more than 100,000 Iraqi lives and \$800 billion from the U.S. Treasury. The question of whether it was worth it all is yet unanswered.

The last convoy of MRAPs, heavily armored personnel carriers, made a largely uneventful journey out except for a few equipment malfunctions along the way. It was dark and little was visible through the MRAP windows as they cruised through the southern Iraqi desert.

When the convoy crossed the border into Kuwait around 7:45 a.m. local time, the atmosphere was subdued inside one of the vehicles, with no shouting or yelling. Along the road, a small group of Iraqi soldiers waved to the departing American troops.

"My heart goes out to the Iraqis," said Warrant Officer John Jewell, acknowledging the challenges ahead. "The innocent always pay the bill."

Soldiers standing just inside the crossing on the Kuwaiti side of the border waved and snapped photos as the final trucks rumbled over.

"I'm pretty excited," said Sgt. Ashley Vorhees. "I'm out of Iraq. It's all smooth sailing from here."

The war that began in a blaze of aerial bombardment meant to shock and awe the dictator Saddam Hussein and his loyalists ended quietly and with minimal fanfare.

President Barack Obama stopped short of calling the U.S. effort in Iraq a victory in an interview taped Thursday with ABC News' Barbara Walters.

"I would describe our troops as having succeeded in the mission of giving to the Iraqis their country in a way that gives them a chance for a successful fu-

ture," Obama said.

In the final days, U.S. officials acknowledged the cost in blood and dollars was high, but tried to paint a picture of victory - for both the troops and the Iraqi people now freed of a dictator and on a path to democracy. But gnawing questions remain: Will Iraqis be able to forge their new government amid the still stubborn sectarian clashes? And will Iraq be able to defend itself and remain independent in a region fraught with turmoil and still steeped in insurgent threats?

Many Iraqis, however, are nervous and uncertain about the future. Their relief at the end of Saddam, who was hanged on Dec. 30 2006, was tempered by a long and vicious war that was launched to find nonexistent weapons of mass destruction and nearly plunged the nation into full-scale sectarian civil war.

Some criticized the Americans for leaving behind a destroyed country with thousands of widows and orphans, a people deeply divided along sectarian lines and without rebuilding the devastated infrastructure.

"We are glad to see the last U.S. soldier leaving the country today. It is an important day in Iraq's history, but the most important thing now is the future of Iraq," said 25-year-old Said Hassan, the owner of money exchange shop in Baghdad. "The Americans have left behind them a country that is falling apart and an Iraqi army and security forces that have a long way ahead to be able to defend the nation and the people."

Some Iraqis celebrated the exit of what they called American occupiers, neither invited nor welcome in a proud country.

Others said that while grateful for U.S. help ousting Saddam, the war went on too long. A majority of Americans would agree, according to opinion polls.

The low-key exit stood in sharp contrast to the high-octane start of the war, which began before dawn on March 20, 2003, with an airstrike in southern Baghdad where Saddam was believed to be hiding. U.S. and allied ground forces then stormed across the featureless Kuwaiti desert, accompanied by reporters, photographers and television crews embedded with the troops.

The final few thousand U.S. troops left in orderly caravans and tightly scheduled flights. They pulled out at night in hopes it would be more secure and left in time for at least some of the troops to join families at home for the Christmas holidays.

The final convoys began to leave on Saturday evening from Camp Adder base near Nasiriyah, about 200 miles (320 kilometers) southeast of Baghdad. The vehicles lined up in an open field

people leaving on the last convoys. In the ceremony, the unit puts away their flags or "cases" them in preparation for departure.

After the ceremony on Saturday evening, the commander of the Special Troops Battalion, Lt. Col. Jack Vantress told his soldiers:

"We are closing the book on an operation that has brought freedom to a country that was repressed. When the sun comes up, we'll be across the berm. Laser focus. Laser focus. You've got time, hours of road to go. There are people out there who still want to hurt you."

The final troops completed the massive logistical challenge of shuttering hundreds of bases and combat outposts, and methodically moving more than 50,000 U.S. troops and their equipment out of Iraq over the last year - while still conducting training, security assistance and counterterrorism battles.

As of Thursday, there were two U.S. bases and less than 4,000 U.S. troops in Iraq—a dramatic drop from the roughly 500 military installations and as many as 170,000 troops during the surge ordered by

President George W. Bush in 2007, when violence and raging sectarianism gripped the country. All U.S. troops were slated to be out of Iraq by the end of the year, but officials are likely to meet that goal a bit before then.

"The biggest thing about going home is just that it's home," Staff Sgt. Daniel Gaumer, 37, from Ft. Hood, Texas said before the convoy left Camp Adder. "It's civilization as I know it, the Western world, not sand and dust and the occasional rain here and there. It's home."

Spc. Jesse Jones, a 23-year-old who volunteered to be on the last convoy, said: "It's just an honor to be able to serve your country and say that you helped close out the war in Iraq. ... Not a lot of people can say that they did huge things like that that will probably

be in the history books."

The total U.S. departure is a bit earlier than initially planned, and military leaders worry that it is premature for the still maturing Iraqi security forces, who face continuing struggles to develop the logistics, air operations, surveillance and intelligence-sharing capabilities they will need in what has long been a difficult region.

Obama's earlier contention that all American troops would be home for Christmas, at least 4,000 forces will remain in Kuwait for some months. The troops will be able to help finalize the move out of Iraq, but could also be used as a quick reaction force if needed.

The U.S. plans to keep a robust diplomatic presence in Iraq, foster a deep and lasting relationship with the nation and maintain a strong military force in the region.

U.S. officials were unable to reach an agreement with the Iraqis on legal issues and troop immunity that would have allowed a small training and counterterrorism force to remain. U.S. defense officials said they expect there will be no movement on that issue until sometime next year.

Obama met in Washington with Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki last week, vowing to remain committed to Iraq as the two countries struggle to define their new relationship.

Ending the war was an early goal of the Obama administration and will allow the president to fulfill a crucial campaign promise during a politically opportune time. The 2012 presidential race is roiling and Republicans are in a ferocious battle to determine who will face off against Obama in the election.

Capt. Mark Askew, a 28-year-old from Tampa, Florida who was among the last soldiers to leave, said the answer to the question of whether the Iraq war was worth the cost will depend on what type of country and government Iraq ends up with years from now, whether they are democratic, respect human rights and are considered an American ally.

"It depends on what Iraq does after we leave," he said, speaking before the final convoy departed. "I don't expect them to turn into South Korea or Japan overnight."

'It depends on what Iraq does after we leave. I don't expect them to turn into South Korea or Japan overnight.'

Health & Fitness

Survey: Teen pot use rises, alcohol use declines

By **TIM MARTIN**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

LANSING, Mich. (AP)—More teens are turning to pot and see it as less of a risk at the same time alcohol use among the same age group has dipped to historic lows, according to an annual national survey of drug use released Wednesday.

The findings were based on a survey of 47,000 eighth-, 10th- and 12th-graders conducted by the University of Michigan for the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

One of every 15 high school seniors reported smoking pot on a daily or near daily basis, the highest rate since 1981.

One of every nine high school seniors reported using synthetic marijuana, sometimes called Spice or K2, within the previous 12 months.

Marijuana use rose among 10th- and 12th-graders, the study said. None of the changes was large enough to be statistically significant, "but they all continue the pattern of a gradual rise," the study said. There was a "non-significant decrease" in the percentage of eighth-graders who reported using pot within the past year.

The percentage of teens saying they see "great risk" in using marijuana generally has dropped in recent years.

"One thing we've learned over the years is that when young people come

to see a drug as dangerous, they're less likely to use it," Lloyd Johnston, the study's principal investigator, said in a telephone interview with The Associated Press. "That helps to explain why marijuana right now is rising, because the proportion of kids who see it as dangerous has been declining."

The study said marijuana use among teens rose in 2011 for the fourth straight year after considerable decline in the preceding decade.

The survey found 36.4 percent of 12th-graders reported using marijuana in the past year, compared to 31.7 percent in the 2007 survey. Usage was at 28.8 percent for 10th-graders and 12.5 percent for eighth-graders within the previous 12 months, according to the 2011 survey.

The synthetic drug survey question was asked for the first time this year. Fake marijuana, sometimes sold in drug paraphernalia shops and on the Internet as incense, contains organic leaves coated with chemicals that provide a marijuana-like high when smoked.

A Drug Enforcement Administration emergency order banning the sale of five chemicals used in herbal blends to make synthetic marijuana took effect March 1. The synthetics are among the many that would be banned under a bill passed in the U.S. House earlier

this month. Many states also have their own laws banning the sale of synthetic marijuana.

Researchers say next year's survey will reveal more about the effectiveness of the control measures, since much of this year's survey covered a response period before the federal action took effect.

White House drug czar Gil Kerlikowske called on parents to get involved to help stop the use of synthetic marijuana.

"It's not in the vocabulary of parents, and they need to be aware of it so that when they have that conversation about substance abuse that they are knowledgeable and they talk about this," he told the AP.

Alcohol use continued a trend of decline dating to the 1980s and hit a historic low for the survey, which began in the 1970s for 12th-graders. Forty percent of 12th-graders reported drinking in the previous 30 days during the 2011 survey, compared to 54 percent in 1991. Drinking also declined significantly at lower grade levels.

Other drugs showing some evidence of decline in use this year include cocaine, crack cocaine and inhalants.

The Monitoring the Future survey also shows that a decline in teen cigarette smoking resumed this year. The number of those who reported smoking in the previous 30 days for the three grades combined was 11.7 percent, compared to 12.8 percent in 2010.

ON THE NET
The survey can be found at <http://www.monitoringthefuture.org>

Personal Trainer

Repairing your desk-job posture

These exercises counteract changes in your posture and muscle tone that sitting at a computer or other sedentary work causes.

"Waxing"

Sit straight, press elbows against sides, turn hands outward with palms facing down; push shoulders together and make a waxing motion in the air for 20 seconds; repeat four times



Wall angels

Press lower back, elbows, forearms and wrists against wall; lift and lower arms slowly in a small arc; keep elbows touching wall; repeat 10 times

Abdomen isometrics

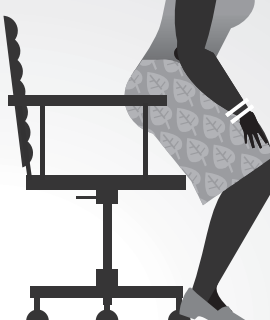
Breathe normally; sit with back supported; tighten stomach as strongly as possible; push with fingers and tighten abdominal muscles to resist them; hold 15 seconds; repeat five times



Standing up from sit

Sit forward in chair with knees a little ahead of feet; stand up slowly keeping neck and back erect; don't bend forward; sit down immediately, but don't put full weight on chair; do three sets of 10 repetitions each

Source:
University of
California-Los
Angeles Office
of Environment,
Health and
Safety



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Graphic: Paul Trap

FIFTH DEATH ANNIVERSARY

In Loving Memory of



Maria (Dema) Demapan Sablan

We, the family, humbly invite all our relatives and friends to join us in prayers as we commemorate the Fifth Year Death Anniversary of our dearly beloved unto eternal life.

Daily Mass is being offered every morning, beginning Friday, December 16, 2011 at 6:00 a.m. at the Mt. Carmel Cathedral.

On the final day, Saturday, December 24th, Mass will be celebrated at 6:00 a.m.

Your presence and prayers will be greatly appreciated.

Un Dangkulu Na Si Yu'us Ma'ase
Ginen I Familia

In Celebration of Her New Life

†Remedio Diaz Camacho

Lovingly known as "Bedu" or "Remedion Celia"

Was called to her eternal rest on December 13, 2011 at the age of 78.

Her Memories Will Forever Live In The Hearts Of Her:

Children And Their Families:

†Joseph C. Schardt (Children and grandchildren)
Eileen Mae C. Schardt
(Children and grandchild)
Glenn C. Schardt and Elizabeth C. Lizama
(Children and grandchildren)
Jeffrey Lee Camacho and Melina Benavente
(Children and grandchildren)

Brothers/ Sisters and In-laws:

†Daniel T. and Rosario Villagomez
†Roman T. and Cecilia M. Villagomez
†Jesus T. Villagomez
†Antonio T. and Remedio Villagomez
Francisco A. and Isabel V. Camacho
†Joaquin T. and Remedio A. Villagomez
†Jose T. and Magdalena T. Villagomez
Frances Sintkoski

In Her New Life, She Now Joins Her:

Mother: Sinforosa Celia Diaz Camacho

Grandchildren: Joseph Schardt Jr. and Lee Troy Camacho

She will be missed by numerous family and friends.

Daily Mass of Intentions is being celebrated each evening at 6:00pm. at San Vicente Church. Funeral services will be held on Friday, December 23, 2011. Her remains will be at Nuestra Senora dela Paz Memorial Chapel beginning at 7:30am. Rosary will be recited at the same time and Responso will be at 8:30am. Her remains will be escorted to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Cathedral at 8:45am and Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 9:00am. Interment service will follow at Mt. Carmel Cemetery where she will be at a peaceful rest. Please join us in prayers,

Thank You — Si Yuus Maase
Children and Family

Life & Style

‘Batman’ star Bale tries to visit China activist

BEIJING (AP)—“Batman” star Christian Bale, in the midst of promoting a film he made in China that some critics have called propaganda, was physically stopped by government-backed guards from visiting a blind activist living under house arrest—with a CNN crew in tow to record the scuffle.

CNN posted footage of the confrontation on its website Friday.

The run-in and publicity is likely to cause discomfort in China’s government-backed film industry, which hopes Bale’s movie “The Flowers of War” will be a creative success at home and abroad. The star’s actions are sure to focus attention on the plight of Chen Guangcheng, guarded around the clock by burly, aggressive security men who have blocked dozens of reporters and fellow activists trying to see him in the past.

Bale was to leave China on Friday and his representatives could not immediately be reached for comment.

Bale, who won a best supporting actor Oscar for last year’s “The Fighter,” traveled Thursday with a crew from CNN to the village in eastern China where Chen, the blind lawyer, lives with his family in complete isolation.

They were stopped at the entrance to Dongshigu village in Shandong province by unidentified men.

The video footage shows Bale asking to see Chen, with a CNN producer providing interpretation, but being ordered by one of the guards to leave. He then asked why he was unable to pass through. The guards responded by trying to grab or punch a small video camera Bale was carrying.

“What I really wanted to do was to meet the man, shake his



In this photo taken on Monday, Dec. 12, 2011, English actor Christian Bale speaks to journalists during an interview on the red carpet as he arrives for an event of the Zhang Yimou-directed new movie “The Flowers of War” in Beijing, China.

hand and say what an inspiration he is,” Bale was quoted as saying by CNN.

Chen’s case has been raised publicly by U.S. lawmakers and diplomats, including Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, all to no response from China.

CNN said Bale first learned of Chen from news reports when he was in China filming “The Flowers of War,” China’s official submission this year for best foreign language film Oscar.

“Chen Guangcheng is a newsworthy figure ... and as such it is in the interest of CNN’s global viewers to hear from him,” CNN said in a statement. “Mr. Bale reached out to CNN and invited us to join him on his journey to visit Chen.”

Chen, a self-taught lawyer who

was blinded by a fever in infancy, angered authorities after documenting forced late-term abortions and sterilizations and other abuses by overzealous authorities trying to meet population control goals in his rural community. He was imprisoned for allegedly instigating an attack on government offices and organizing a group of people to disrupt traffic, charges his supporters say were fabricated.

Although now officially free under the law, he has been confined to his home in the village eight hours’ drive from Beijing and subjected to periodic beatings and other abuse, activists say.

While Bale’s visit focuses new attention on Chen’s case, CNN’s role raises questions about activism and advocacy among re-

porters, said David Bandurski, editor of the China Media Project website at the University of Hong Kong.

“It made me instantly uncomfortable, wondering how it all came together. It raises questions about where the lines are drawn,” Bandurski said.

The incident also drew strong interest—most of it highly positive—on social networking sites such as Twitter and its Chinese equivalent, Weibo.

Having their star’s name ping-pong across the Internet in con-

nection with such a politically sensitive subject puts promoters of “The Flowers of War” in a bind. The film opens in China on Friday and next week in the United States.

Directed by the renowned Zhang Yimou, it is also the most expensive Chinese movie ever made, at \$94 million, some of which came from the state-owned Bank of China.

The movie centers on the 1937 sacking of the eastern city of Nanjing, a central event in China’s pre-revolutionary “century

of humiliation” and has been described by some critics as hewing to official propaganda portraying Chinese as heroic victims and Japanese as one-dimensional cartoon villains.

While China has the world’s third-largest film industry—both in box office and output—it has made relatively little global impact. Story lines are often heavily influenced by the ruling Communist Party, whose culture commissars must approve scripts and have final say over whether a film gets released.

Clooney vs. Gosling: Who should win?

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP)—George Clooney vs. Ryan Gosling ... it really is a matter of personal preference, isn’t it? And maybe it’s a generational thing, too.

Both actors are sexy and gorgeous, of course, but both also have chosen difficult film roles that intentionally play down their looks. Both ooze movie-star charisma but both have displayed versatility, as well.

And both will be competing in the category of best actor in a drama at the Golden Globe Awards on Jan. 15; nominations were announced Thursday morning. Clooney is up for “The Descendants,” in which he plays a father struggling to raise his two daughters while his wife is in a coma; Gosling is up for “The Ides of March,” in which he plays a cunning campaign strategist for a democratic presidential hopeful ... played by Clooney. (Gosling also received a nomination for best actor in a comedy for playing a ladies man in “Crazy, Stupid, Love.”)

Perhaps a little tale of the tape can help us determine an early winner:

AGE: Clooney just turned 50 this year; Gosling is 31.

HEIGHT: Clooney is 5-foot-10; Gosling is 6-foot-1.

HOMETOWN: Clooney was born in Lexington, Ky.; Gosling grew up in Cornwall, Ontario, Canada.

MOST IMPRESSIVE PERFORMANCE: For Clooney, it’s so hard to choose, simply because he’s been around longer and made more movies. Maybe “Syriana” (see below) because it was so demanding both physically and emotionally. But man, is he great in “Michael Clayton.” As for Gosling, he had to dig deep for “The Believer” (2001), in which he played a Jewish man who becomes an anti-Semitic skinhead. It was an early indication of his vast talent. But man, is he great in “Blue Valentine.”

MOST OUT-THERE PERFORMANCE: Clooney



In this Sept. 27, 2011 file photo, director, writer, and cast member George Clooney, right, and cast member Ryan Gosling pose together at the premiere of “The Ides of March,” in Beverly Hills, Calif.

showed his goofy side as a smooth-talking escaped convict in the Coen brothers’ 2000 comedy “O Brother, Where Art Thou?” Gosling fell in love with a life-sized doll named Bianca in 2007’s “Lars and the Real Girl.”

BRUSHES WITH OSCAR: Clooney packed on the pounds, grew a shaggy beard and became virtually unrecognizable to play a CIA operative in 2005’s “Syriana,” which earned him the Academy Award for best supporting actor. That same year, he also was nominated for directing and co-writing the TV news drama “Good Night, and Good Luck.” Since then, he’s earned two other best-actor nominations: for “Michael Clayton” (2007) and “Up in the Air” (2009). Gosling was a surprise nominee for 2006’s “Half Nelson”—not because he was undeserving, far from it, but because it was such a small, little-known film. He played a middle-school teacher with a drug problem.

EMBARRASSING BEGINNINGS: Clooney rocked the mullet in the mid-’80s on the sitcom “The Facts of Life,” where he played a handyman named George. Gosling was a member of “The Mickey Mouse Club” in the early 1990s, around the same time as Justin Timberlake, Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera.

“SEXIEST MAN ALIVE”

STATUS: Clooney has the rare distinction of winning the annual honor from People magazine twice: in 1997 and 2006. Gosling hasn’t won—yet—but this year’s winner, Bradley Cooper, has conceded that Gosling deserved the title more than he did.

ON-SCREEN ROMANCES: Clooney: Michelle Pfeiffer (“One Fine Day”); Jennifer Lopez (“Out of Sight”); Julia Roberts (“Ocean’s Eleven” and “Ocean’s Twelve”); Catherine Zeta-Jones (“Intolerable Cruelty”); Vera Farmiga (“Up in the Air”). Gosling: Rachel McAdams (“The Notebook”); Michelle Williams (“Blue Valentine”); Emma Stone (“Crazy, Stupid, Love”); Carey Mulligan (“Drive”); an anatomically correct sex doll (“Lars and the Real Girl”).

OFF-SCREEN ROMANCES: Clooney is divorced from actress Talia Balsam and has dated model Lisa Snowdon, former reality show contestant and cocktail waitress Sarah Larson and actress Elisabetta Canalis. He is now dating former WWE star Stacy Keibler. Gosling previously dated his “Notebook” co-star McAdams and has been linked most recently to Eva Mendes.

THE WINNER: A tie. While Clooney will probably win on Golden Globe night, Gosling is so hot these days he seems unstoppable.

Beach Boys announce 50th anniversary reunion tour

NEW YORK (AP)—It’s almost winter, but get ready for some surf and sun: The Beach Boys are reuniting.

The founding members of the classic rock group—Brian Wilson, Mike Love and Al Jardine—announced Friday they are getting back together to celebrate their 50th anniversary. They’re working on a new album and also plan a 50-date tour that will take them around the world.

“This anniversary is special to me because I miss the boys, and it will be a thrill for me to make a new record and be on stage with them again,” Wilson said in a statement.

The group also includes Bruce Johnston and David Marks, both of whom have been with the band for decades.

The Rock and Roll Hall of Famers gave birth to the California rock sound. Back then, the band members were Love,

Jardine, Wilson and his two brothers—Carl and Dennis Wilson, who have since died. With songs like “Good Vibrations,” “I Get Around” and “California Girls,” the quintet embodied the fantasy of West Coast beach life. Their albums, particularly “Pet Sounds,” influenced rockers of their generation and beyond.

But Wilson suffered mental problems that caused him to withdraw from the band, and there were years of animosity between Love and Wilson, who are cousins, as well as lawsuits among members of the band. Still, they have gotten back together over the years, including for their 40th anniversary in the last decade.

Love remarked in the statement Friday on how he and Wilson were getting along well, sharing compliments together in the studio.

“Music has been the unifying and harmonizing fact of life in

our family since childhood,” he said. “It has been a huge blessing that we have been able to share with the world.” Referring to a Beach Boy hit, he added: “Wouldn’t It Be Nice to Do It Again? Absolutely!”

The group was supposed to announce their reunion as a surprise during the Recording Academy’s live nominations special for the Grammys last month, but those plans fell through.

However, Jardine said the group planned to appear at the Feb. 12 Grammy telecast in Los Angeles.

“There will be a surprise at the Grammys,” he told Rolling Stone. “We will do something really exciting. There’s a lot of interest in it, which is nice. It’s going to be a very big operation.”

The Beach Boys first concert is scheduled for April 27 at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival.

Britney Spears engaged to marry Jason Trawick

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Britney Spears is ready to walk down the aisle for the third time. The 30-year-old pop star has agreed to marry her long-time boyfriend and former agent Jason Trawick.

Trawick announced Friday on "Access Hollywood" that he and Spears are engaged. The two have been dating since 2009.

Spears hinted at the big news with a tweet Friday morning that read, "OMG. Last night Jason surprised me with the one gift I've been waiting for. Can't wait to show you! SO SO SO excited!!!!"

Spears was previously married to Kevin Federline, with whom she has two sons: 6-year-old Sean Preston and 5-year-old Jayden James. The couple divorced in 2006. Spears also briefly wed childhood friend Jason Alexander in 2004, but the marriage was annulled after 55 hours.

In this May 11, 2011 file photo, singer Britney Spears, right, and Jason Trawick arrive at an Evening of "Southern Style" in Beverly Hills, Calif.

AP



Reggae star Buju Banton appeals drug conviction

MIAMI (AP)—Grammy-winning reggae star Buju Banton claims in an appeal of his federal drug conviction there was not enough evidence to prove he was involved in a cocaine conspiracy.

The appeal filed Friday by attorney David O. Markus also says Banton was relentlessly pursued by a federal informant seeking a \$50,000 government payday. Markus says that resulted in improper entrapment.

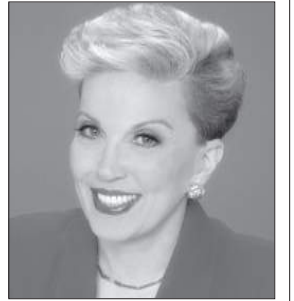
Banton, whose real name is Mark Myrie, is serving a 10-year prison sentence following his February conviction on cocaine conspiracy and trafficking charges. A related gun charge was tossed out by a judge.

Banton is extremely popular in his native Jamaica and won a Grammy for his latest album shortly before his drug conviction.

It will likely be months before the Atlanta-based 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals issues a decision.

Boyfriend's mom isn't ready to give up Christmas tradition

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: My boyfriend and I have been living together for nine months. We have decided to host Christmas dinner at our house and invited 20 people—10 from each of our families. His mother, unfortunately, is having a hard time accepting that her 27-year-old son is growing up.

She says she feels "awkward" and that their family has had its traditions for many years. (My boyfriend has spent every Christmas Eve and Christmas night at his parents' house since birth.)

I come from a family that is adaptable to change. Any suggestions for dealing with this potential future mother-in-law?

FREE SPIRIT IN PHOENIX

DEAR FREE SPIRIT: First of all, don't plan on your boyfriend's parents attending your Christmas dinner, and don't take it personally if they don't. She may be unwilling to change their Christmas tradition.

If and when a wedding date is set, or your boyfriend makes clear to her that your arrangement will be permanent, the three of you can then come to an agreement to alternate these holidays so you and your parents are able to also host these gatherings. This is how new families establish their own traditions and in-laws aren't made to feel that one side is favored.

DEAR ABBY: I have been with my fiancé for two years. Lately he's been having trouble controlling his anger. His outbursts are becoming more frequent, and he feels like they're justified. He says if I didn't "nag" him so much there wouldn't be any arguments.

I love him and want to spend the rest of my life with him, but I'm becoming frightened by the level he allows his anger to reach. Can you help a man like this deal with his anger?

NEEDS HELP IN NORTH CAROLINA

DEAR NEEDS HELP: No, and neither can you, as much as you might wish to. Only he can do that, and it would take willingness on his part and counseling. Blaming you for his outbursts indicates he's not ready to do that. The smartest thing you can do is leave before he escalates to hurting you physically. Without professional help, the behavior you have described will only get worse.

DEAR ABBY: I have an elderly neighbor I have been friends with for many years. Over the past several years she has had numerous medical problems. I have done everything I can to be her friend. I do things around the house, bring her meals, whatever I can. She has no family and only one other friend besides me.

She is depressed and stays in bed most of the day, which contributes to her aches and pains. I keep telling her she needs to get up and walk or her pain will get worse. It has reached the point where she's so nasty about everything that I don't even want to talk to her.

I understand that she's scared and feels beaten up. I try to talk about things that are noncontroversial—happy things. It doesn't work. She turns everything into an argument. I don't know what to do. I hate to ignore her, but it's really taking a toll on me. Am I a fair-weather friend?

TRYING TO BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR
IN MASSACHUSETTS

DEAR GOOD NEIGHBOR: No, you are a caring friend. Your elderly neighbor is ill, and she may be becoming demented. Because she is no longer able to care for herself or her home, contact the nearest hospital or senior center and ask to speak with a social worker on staff. The woman you describe may need more help than you can give her, from people with the training to do it.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$12 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby - Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in price.)

Michael Jackson house contents sell for nearly \$1M

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP)—The contents of the home where Michael Jackson lived with his three children just before his death have sold for nearly \$1 million at auction.

Darren Julien, president of Julien's Auctions, was unable to provide a more specific figure as he continued to tally the totals Saturday after the day-long auction, which brought in nearly triple the company's pre-auction estimate of

Mo. university chief sorry band played 'Dixie'

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. (AP)—Missouri State University is apologizing after its band performed "Dixie" at a site where three black men were lynched in 1906.

Interim President Clif Smart tells the Springfield News-Leader the song was an "unfortunate selection" and won't be played again in a public venue.

The Confederate anthem has come to represent the ideology of the Old South.

The school's Pride Band played "Dixie" at the Nov. 18 dedication of Park Central Square in Springfield, the southwest Missouri city where the university is located. A plaque identifies the square as the location where three black men were lynched more than a century ago.

Smart says the band director didn't understand the significance of the song.

The local NAACP president says "Dixie" was an inappropriate choice and sparked community complaints.



AP

Paula Pereira, from San Clemente, Calif., photographs a Michael Jackson-inscribed Victorian revival style armoire with the text "Train, perfection March April Full out May" on the mirror during a private preview of contents of 100 North Carolwood Drive, the final home of Michael Jackson, that will be up for auction at Julien's Auctions in Beverly Hills, Calif. on Sunday, Dec. 11, 2011.

\$200,000 to \$400,000.

Among the highlights: A

kitchen chalkboard where Jackson's children wrote "I love dad-

Performer hurt in fall during 'Faust' at Met Opera

NEW YORK (AP)—Mezzo-soprano Wendy White has been hospitalized after falling about eight feet from a platform to the stage during a performance of Charles Gounod's "Faust" at New York's Metropolitan Opera.

The Met Opera says White is in stable condition and undergoing further tests. Her injuries do

not appear to be serious.

White was performing the role of Marthe in Saturday's performance.

Met spokesman Peter Clark said in a statement that White fell as she entered backstage during Act III onto a platform that is connected to the scenery. The opera did not say how

dy," which sold for \$5,000, and an armoire upon which Jackson wrote a message to himself on the mirror that fetched \$25,750.

The auction also included furniture, artwork and other items from the rented mansion at 100 North Carolwood Drive, where Jackson lived as he prepared for a series of comeback concerts in London before his death in June, 2009.

The headboard from the bed where Jackson died at age 50 was removed from the auction at the family's request, but the rug that was beneath the bed sold for \$15,360. The estimate had been \$400 to \$600.

Julien's Auctions re-created the mansion inside its Beverly Hills showroom and invited fans to fill the space where the bed would have been with a tribute to the late King of Pop. Julien promised to deliver all of the tribute items to Jackson's children and family matriarch Katherine Jackson.

"Michael Jackson has the greatest fans in the world. I can see why he lived for them," Julien said. "They came out every day this week to bring gifts. It's unlike anything we've ever seen as it relates to a celebrity and their fans."

she fell.

A black curtain was brought down and intermission announced.

White was seen by the house doctor and taken by ambulance to the hospital.

The performance resumed with Theodora Hanslowe substituting in the role of Marthe.

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Attorney for Plaintiff

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS**

MARIANAS PUBLIC LAND TRUST,	]	Civil Action
Plaintiff,	]	No. 10-0254CV
]	
vs.]	
]	
YVONNE A. ATALIG and]	
GODEL OMENGEAR,]	
Defendants.]	

NOTICE OF AUCTION and JUDICIAL SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that under and by virtue of a judgment made and entered in the above titled action on the 6th day of May, 2011, by the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, to satisfy the amount found and adjudged due Plaintiff in the above titled action from Defendants, as prescribed in the judgment, the undersigned counsel or his designee will sell at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the 13th day of January, 2012 at 10 a.m., at the Marianas Public Land Trust Conference Room, Capitol Hill, Saipan, the premises and real estate, lying and being on Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, described in said judgment, to wit:

Lot No. 347 R 90, located on Rota, containing an area 828 square meters, more or less, as particularly described on the Division of Lands and Survey's Official Cadastral Plat No. 347 R. 07, the original of which was recorded on December 9, 1993, as Document No. 93-4282 at the Commonwealth Recorder's Office, Saipan..

Terms and Conditions of Sale.

- Rights and duties of Auctioneer.** Consistent with the custom and usage and applicable laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands governing auction sales with reserve, the auctioneer or his designee shall have the following rights and duties in conducting the auction sale:
a) withdraw the property listed for sale in the public announcement before sale or before a bid for such property is accepted.
b) To adjourn the sale without notice at any time before any specific property is sold, without incurring any liability whatsoever thereby; and
c) To reject any and all bids.
- Bids.** Tentative bids may be submitted in advance for any and all of the property listed in the notice. Such bids shall not be binding, except that the highest of such bids will automatically be considered the opening bid for the property. Bids may be entered in person, in writing, or by telephone to Robert T. Torres, Attorney at Law, Plata Drive, Chalan Kiya, P.O. Box 503758, Saipan, MP 96950, Phone: 670-234-7859; Fax: 670-234-5749; Email: rttlaw@pticom.com.
- Deposit and Payment.** A deposit of ten percent (10%) of the purchase price must be paid on the day of the auction sale. The remaining balance will be due within ten days of the auction sale. All payments must be made by cash, cashier's check, or money order. Failure to make payment of the remaining balance within ten days will result in forfeiture by the buyer of the 10% deposit, and any and all of the buyer's rights, title and interest in any of the property will revert to MPLT.
- Change of Terms.** Auctioneer and MPLT reserve the right to change any of the terms of conduct an enforcement of sale by announcement, written or oral, made before the auction sale or at the commencement thereof, and such change or changes, by virtue of this clause shall be binding on any buyer by constructive notice.
- Inspection and No Warranty.** Bidders are cautioned to inspect the title and property. Contact the Law Office of Robert T. Torres for scheduled viewing and inspection times. The interests of the property are being sold "AS IS" and without warranty. Failure to inspect the real property will not constitute a ground for any claim, adjustment or rescission by any buyer.

DATED This 29th day of November, 2011.

/s/ Robert T. Torres, Auctioneer



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JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Open Date: December 8, 2011 **Close Date:** December 19, 2011
Position: (1) Waitress/Waiter **Salary:** \$5.05 per hour

Job Qualification: High School Graduated / Two Years Experience / Preferred Chinese Speaking

For more information you may contact Mr. Juan I Tenorio, Manager for Human Resources Department at (670) 234-6495 ext. 5840/2. Employment application forms are available at Hafadai Beach Hotel, Human Resource Department.

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JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Open Date: December 12, 2011 **Close Date:** December 23, 2011
Position: (1) Accountant **Salary:** \$5.05 per hour

Job Qualification: Bachelor Degree in Accountancy. / Two (2) Years Experience in Large Corporation.

For more information you may contact Mr. Juan I Tenorio, Manager for Human Resources Department at (670) 234-6495 ext. 5840/2. Employment application forms are available at Hafadai Beach Hotel, Human Resources Department.

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COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE PICKED-UP AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY, LOWER BASE DR., SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THIS IS A FEDERALLY FUNDED PROJECT; AS SUCH, **LOCAL PREFERENCE IS NOT AVAILABLE** BECAUSE ITS USE IS PROHIBITED BY FEDERAL LAW GRANTING FUNDING FOR THIS PROJECT.

/S/ RAMON C. MAFNAS
COMMISSIONER, DEPT. OF PUBLIC SAFETY

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

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ATTORNEYS FOR Plaintiff

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN
MARIANA ISLANDS**

THE FINANCIAL & INSURANCE SERVICES GROUP, INC.,	]	CIVIL ACTION
Plaintiff,	]	NO. 09-0338
]	
-v-	]	THIRD
	]	AMENDED
	]	NOTICE
	]	OF SALE
RAMON P. AGULTO and]	
DALIA R. AGULTO,]	
Defendants.]	

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to Order issued by the Court in this matter on June 16, 2010, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all the right, title, and interest of Defendant in and to the following property: Lot 001 G 32, situated in Kagman, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 001 G 02, the original of which was recorded March 20, 1986 as Document No. 86-0513 at the Commonwealth Recorder's Office, Saipan, and also recorded on February 16, 1989, as Document No. 89-511, at the Commonwealth Recorder's Office, Saipan, the description therein being incorporated herein by this reference.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on Friday, December 30, 2011, at the hour of 1:30 p.m., at The Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public.

Terms and Conditions of Sale. The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

DATED, this 14th day of November, 2011:

/s/ MICHAEL A. WHITE, Auctioneer

Robert Tenorio Torres
Attorney at Law
Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya)
P.O. Box 503758
Saipan, MP 96950

Tel: (670) 234-7859
Fax: (670) 234-5749

Attorney for Plaintiff

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE NORTHERN
MARIANA ISLANDS**

MARIANAS PUBLIC LAND TRUST,	]	Civil Action
Plaintiff,	]	No. 11-0129-CV
]	
vs.	]	AMENDED
	]	SUMMONS
INAS JOHN M. HOCOG,]	
LAWRENCE M. HOCOG]	
and LORETO B. HOCOG]	
a.k.a. LARRY B. HOCOG,]	
Defendants.]	

**TO THE ABOVE-NAMED DEFENDANT
INAS JOHN M. HOCOG and
LAWRENCE M. HOCOG:**

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED AND NOTIFIED to file any answer you wish to make to the COMPLAINT within twenty (20) days after service of this AMENDED SUMMONS upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to Robert Tenorio Torres, Attorney at Law, P.O. Box 503758, Saipan, MP 96950, or as soon as practicable after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Court of the above-entitled Court for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Office of the Clerk of Court, CNMI Superior Court, 1st Floor, Guma' Hustisia, Iimwal Aweewe, House of Justice, P.O. Box 500307, Saipan, MP 96950-0307. It may be prepared and signed for you by your attorney and sent to the Clerk of Court by messenger or by mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

If you fail to file an answer in accordance with this AMENDED SUMMONS, judgment by default pursuant to the court rules of the above-entitled Court may be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

SO ORDERED on this 28th day of July, 2011.

/s/ CLERK OF COURT

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Romo powers Cowboys past Buccaneers



TAMPA, Fla. (AP)—Tony Romo was nearly flawless in getting the Dallas Cowboys back on track in the NFC East.

Romo threw for three touchdowns and ran for a fourth score Saturday night, helping the first-place Cowboys beat the struggling Tampa Bay Buccaneers, 31-15.

Dallas stopped a two-game losing streak in which it blew fourth-quarter leads to allow a seemingly solid grip on the division lead slip away.

The victory gave the Cowboys (8-6) a half-game lead over New York. Although the Giants hold a tiebreaker advantage after beating Dallas 37-34 last week, the Cowboys can claim the division title and host a playoff game by finishing with wins the next two weeks over Philadelphia at home and the Giants on the road.

The Bucs (4-10) lost for the eighth straight time and played a miserable first half that certainly didn't do anything to help coach Raheem Morris make a case for keeping his job.

Romo threw a pair of 8-yard TD passes to Miles Austin and Dez Bryant in the first quarter, then finished a seven-play, 89-yard drive with a 9-yarder to Laurent Robinson to make it 21-0 with just under 5 minutes remaining in the second quarter. Romo made it 28-0 on a quarterback sneak in the closing seconds of the opening half.

Tampa Bay managed just one first down and was outgained 279 yards to 55 in the first two quarters, but found a way to make it interesting in the second half.



Dallas Cowboys quarterback Tony Romo, center, dives over the goal line for a 1-yard touchdown against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers during the first half of an NFL football game on Saturday, Dec. 17, 2011, in Tampa, Fla.

The Bucs, who had had yielded 69 consecutive points dating to the second quarter of the previous week's 41-14 loss to Jacksonville, finally got on the scoreboard in the third quarter when rookie Adrian Clayborn sacked Romo from behind, forcing a fumble that linebacker Dekoda Watson returned 4 yards for a TD for a much-needed spark.

Josh Freeman's 13-yard TD pass

to Dezmon Briscoe and a two-point conversion throw to Kellen Winslow trimmed the Dallas lead to 31-15 heading into the final quarter.

The Cowboys have led in the fourth quarter in five of their six losses, however there wouldn't be a late collapse this time. Tampa Bay turned the ball over on downs twice in the last six minutes, and Sammy Morris picked up a first down inside the Bucs 10 to

give the Cowboys an opportunity to run out the clock.

Austin's TD midway through the first quarter was set up by Tampa Bay's NFL-leading 32nd turnover, a fumble by Freeman on the fifth play of the game.

The Tampa Bay quarterback scrambled 25 yards on third-and-5 to march the Bucs near midfield, but the opening possession of the night came to

an abrupt halt on the next play when Freeman took off again for a 7-yard gain and was stripped of the ball at the Cowboys 44.

Linebacker Bradie James recovered and it took Romo seven plays to get Dallas in the end zone for the first time. The Cowboys marched 69 yards in 10 plays on their next possession, with Romo finishing the drive by finding a wide-open Bryant in the back of the end zone to make it 14-0.

In three career games against Tampa Bay - all lopsided victories - Romo has thrown for 908 yards, 11 touchdowns and no interceptions. He was 23 of 30 for 249 yards and was sacked twice Saturday night.

Felix Jones, back in the starting lineup after DeMarco Murray broke his right ankle last week in a 37-34 loss to the Giants, broke a 38-yard run on the drive leading to Robinson's TD and finished with 108 yards on 22 carries —his second straight 100-yard performance had 67 yards rushing on 12 carries at halftime.

Freeman, making his second start since missing a game because of an injured throwing shoulder, was 17 of 27 for 148 yards and no interceptions. He led the Bucs in rushing with 37 yards on four attempts and was sacked three times, once by DeMarcus Ware, who notched his 16th of the season.

Thanks to a large contingent of Cowboys fans, the Bucs played before a sellout crowd at home for just the second time in two seasons. Judging by all the blue and white jerseys scattered throughout the 65,000-seat stadium, at least half the house appeared to be rooting for Dallas.

Lakers get a lump of coal for Christmas



LOS ANGELES (AP)—It started innocently enough, with the Los Angeles Lakers swooping in as the NBA lockout ended to grab Chris Paul and add another superstar for the beautiful people sitting courtside at Staples Center to enjoy.

Nothing new there. Just the Lakers being the Lakers, eager to make amends for the first NBA finals they missed in four years. Word was they might even land Dwight Howard, giving them a trio of stars to rival even the biggest stars in Miami.

Then David Stern stepped in as the Grinch who stole Christmas. And so began a week that would make even Jack Nicholson flinch.

It ended Friday night with news out of the Southland that was far more shocking than it would have been eight years ago. Kobe Bryant's wife filed for divorce, adding another layer of uncertainty to a season that seems to be crumbling even before it begins.

How's this for parity in the new NBA? The team that has been in three of the last four NBA finals - winning two of them - might now be the second best team in its own arena.

The Clippers - with Paul now

in their backcourt and Blake Griffin with his spectacular dunks - already own the buzz. They might soon own the town.

"I'd definitely go watch them," Bryant said the other day. "Blake Griffin has, like, a 60-inch vertical. Chris is vastly entertaining. For sure, I'd go check them out. They're a team with a high motor. They're young, and they run up and down the floor."

The Lakers, of course, were that kind of team - and it wasn't so long ago. No one was more entertaining than Bryant, Lamar Odom was the best player in the league coming off the bench, and Pau Gasol gave them an inside-outside game that was hard to shut down.

But Bryant is now in his 16th year, and growing increasingly grumpy by the day. Odom was unceremoniously shipped to Dallas in the wake of the failed Paul trade and Gasol has to be wondering how long the welcome mat will remain out for him.

Phil Jackson is gone, too, taking his special courtside chair and his collection of NBA titles with him. There's a new offense to learn under Mike Brown, and only a few days to learn it before the Lakers open the season Christmas Day against the Chicago Bulls.

And there's no sign Howard will be heading to the West

Coast anytime soon.

"I've never quite seen something like this unfold," Bryant said. "It's kind of become somewhat of a mess."

Things got even messier for Lakers fans when Bryant's wife filed for divorce after a decade

of marriage. Vanessa Bryant famously stuck with her husband after he was charged with sexual assault in Colorado in 2003, and reports at the time said he bought her a \$4 million diamond ring.

Bryant managed to play his way through those troubles, and he's got the on-court focus to do the same thing with his current

personal woes. But he's now 33 and the wear and tear of so many NBA seasons has taken its toll in a variety of injuries the past few years. His best years are almost surely behind him, and his ability to take over games almost at will is not what it once was.

He's not happy Stern snatched Paul away before he could put

on a Lakers uniform, and even less happy the Lakers traded Odom to Dallas with little more than a draft pick in return.

The start of the season may reignite his fire. But the fact remains that this Laker team is a year older and not as good as the one that was embarrassed by the Mavericks in the playoffs last year, even with Ron Artest being replaced by Metta World Peace.

For that, Stern deserves much of the blame. Without his interference the Lakers would be a much different team, with two superstars in the backcourt and more than enough money left over to help acquire Howard from Orlando. Indeed, Stern's veto of the trade had to make Laker owner Jerry Buss apoplectic, especially after Stern approved the eventual trade to the Clippers.

Stern accomplished what he wanted, which was not allowing the rich to get richer. That was an important message to send in the wake of the 149-day lockout, but it cost the Lakers dearly —especially when Odom felt disrespected by being included in the aborted Paul trade and demanded to go elsewhere.

Now the Lakers have a lot to sort out, and little time to do it. Christmas is a week away, and the Bulls won't be coming to town bearing gifts.

Right now Lakers fans have to be feeling as if they just got a lump of coal in their stockings.

Warm reception for Magic's Howard at scrimmage

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—It's another week before the Orlando Magic officially open regular-season play.

That doesn't mean that Magic fans are waiting around to show their top star how much they want him to stay in town.

In his first on-court appearance in front of fans since making a trade request, Howard was greeted to a loud ovation from about 9,000 fans when he was introduced during a free, open scrimmage the team held at Amway Center on Saturday.

The All-Star center has spent each of his seven NBA seasons in Orlando, but asked management to be traded shortly after the Magic opened training camp.

Howard's No. 12 jersey was worn by fans throughout the crowd Saturday, many of whom held professionally printed signs from StayDwight.com that read "Superman This Is Your Metrop-

olis." Other homemade signs were also on display, nearly all including three words: Dwight, please and stay.

"We didn't know what to expect because of what we heard and what's been posted (negatively) on my (Twitter) timeline," Howard said. "They see it and they thought it was going to be a different scenario. But it was great for me and my teammates. We're looking forward to starting off the season on a good note."

Howard said Thursday although there hasn't been any movement on his trade request, it still stands. His agent, Dan Fegan, has permission from Magic general manager Otis Smith to discuss trades with Dallas, New Jersey and the Los Angeles Lakers.

Howard can opt out of his current contract in July 2012 and become a free agent.

During the player introduc-

tions Saturday, Howard received a standing ovation. He said that moment was special for him.

"It was emotional," he said. "It was great to see their reaction. And like I've told you guys from Day 1, I love this city...When I came here, everybody called our team the Orlando Tragic. I wanted to change it. Nobody says tragic anymore."

Magic fan Dallas Wilkes, from Howard's native Georgia, sat near midcourt and said he supports Howard even though there's uncertainty about whether he'll remain in an Orlando uniform.

"I have mixed feelings," Wilkes, 28, said. "I understand he's a person and needs to do what's best for him. But this is a great place. The guys that are here really seem to like it, and hopefully what's best for him is what's best for us."

Rollins, Phillies agree on 3-year, \$33M deal



PHILADELPHIA
(AP)—Jimmy Rollins is bringing his swagger back to the Phillies.

Three people familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press that Rollins has agreed to a 3-year, \$33 million contract with Philadelphia. The deal includes a vesting option for a fourth year.

The people spoke on condition of anonymity Saturday because the agreement is pending a physical.

"Gotta deal with me for 3 (4) more years!" Rollins wrote on Twitter. He also thanked former Philadelphia Eagles safety Brian Dawkins, who tweeted congratulations to Rollins and the Phillies.

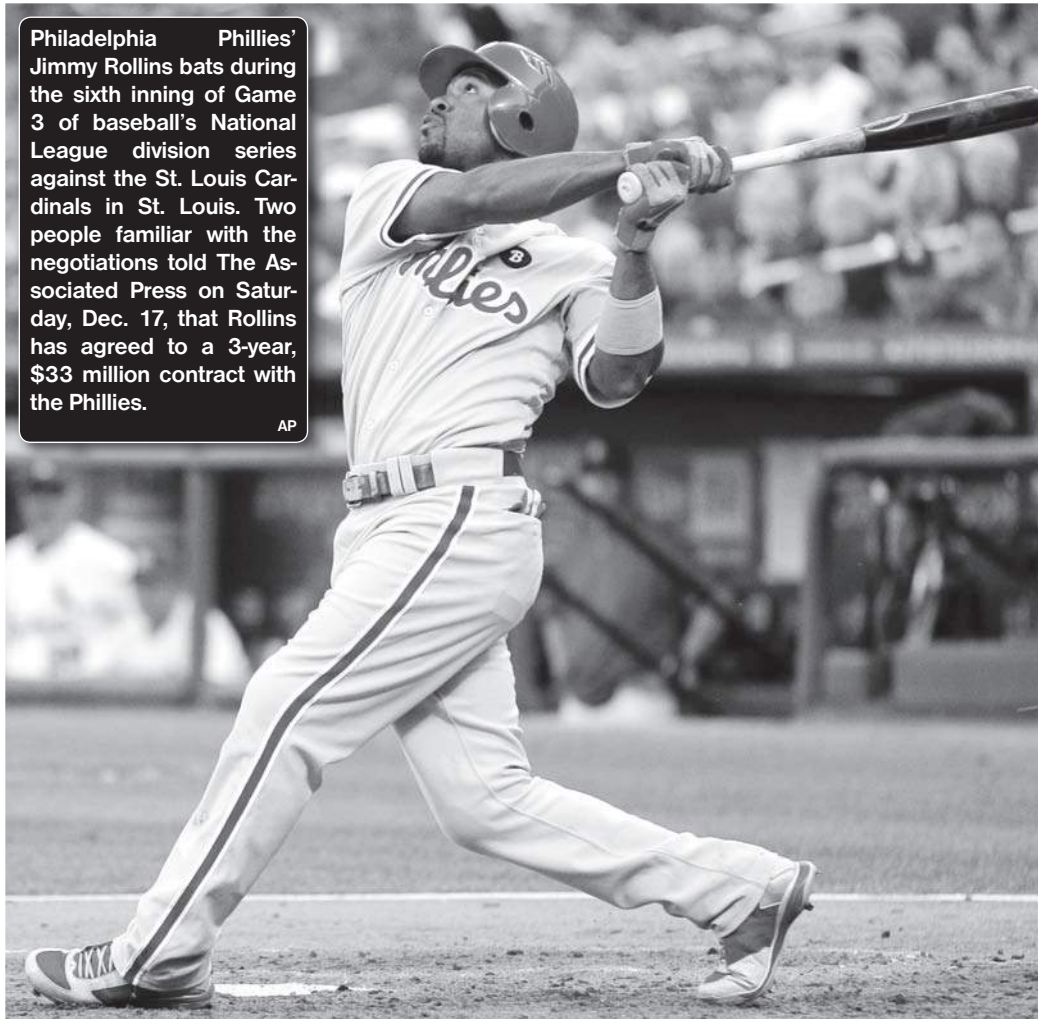
Rollins is a three-time All-Star shortstop and the 2007 NL MVP. He has spent his entire career with the Phillies after being selected in the second round of the 1996 amateur draft, and was a free agent for the first time.

Rollins, who turned 33 last month, sought at least a five-year deal. The Phillies didn't want to go that long, and were able to reach an agreement after the market for Rollins lessened.

From the start, Rollins said he wanted to stay in Philadelphia. He has been the heart and soul of a team that has won five consecutive NL East titles and the 2008 World Series. Rollins is undeniably the team leader, a charismatic personality who brings a special confidence to

Philadelphia Phillies'
Jimmy Rollins bats during the sixth inning of Game 3 of baseball's National League division series against the St. Louis Cardinals in St. Louis. Two people familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press on Saturday, Dec. 17, that Rollins has agreed to a 3-year, \$33 million contract with the Phillies.

AP



the clubhouse.

Rollins was the guy who boldly proclaimed the Phillies were the team to beat in the division before the 2007 season, even though Philadelphia hadn't won anything in 14 years. He backed that up by having an MVP year, and leading the Phillies to their first postseason appearance since 1993.

Rollins hasn't come close to matching the numbers he put up in 2007 - .296 average, 30 homers, 94 RBIs, 20 triples, 41 steals. But he remains one of the best defensive players at his position, and is still an offensive threat atop the lineup.

He hit .268 with 16 homers, 63 RBIs and 30 steals this year. He has been plagued by

leg injuries in three of the last four years, and played in a career-low 88 games in 2010. He started 135 this year.

Re-signing Rollins had been a top priority for the Phillies. Their biggest move of the offseason was giving former Boston closer Jonathan Papelbon a \$50 million, four-year contract.

Bonds gets 30-day home sentence—at worst

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Eight years of being investigated for steroid allegations ended for home run king Barry Bonds on Friday with a 30-day sentence to be served at home. No more - and maybe less.

U.S. District Judge Susan Illston immediately delayed imposing the sentence while Bonds appeals his obstruction of justice conviction. The former baseball star was found guilty in April not of using steroids, but of misleading grand jurors.

Even without prison time, the case has left its mark on the seven-time National League MVP. His 762 career home runs, and 73 homers in 2001, may forever be seen as tainted records, and his ticket to baseball's Hall of Fame is in doubt.

Bonds declined to speak in court. Well-wishers hugged the 47-year-old in the hallway courtroom after the hearing was over, and a smattering of fans cheered him as he left the courthouse. It was a marked departure from his initial court appearance four years ago, when guards had to clear a path for Bonds to get through dozens of onlookers to his SUV.

"Whatever he did or didn't do, we all lie," said Esther Picazo, a fan outside the courthouse. "We all make mistakes.

But I don't think he should've gotten any kind of punishment at all."

Bonds was sentenced to two years of probation, 250 hours of community service, a \$4,000 fine and 30 days of home confinement. It will take time to determine whether he serves any of it; his appellate specialist, Dennis Riordan, estimated it would take nearly a year and a half for the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to rule.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Matthew Parrella called the sentence a "slap on the wrist" and the fine "almost laughable" for a superstar athlete who made more than \$192 million for playing baseball.

Parrella had sought 15 months in prison and argued that home confinement wasn't punishment enough "for a man with a 15,000-square-foot house with all the advantages." Bonds lives in a six-bedroom, 10-bath house with a gym and swimming pool.

"The defendant basically lived a double life for decades before this," Parrella said. He ripped Bonds not only over performance-enhancing drugs but over his personal life: "He had mistresses throughout his marriages."

Parrella said Bonds made lots of money due in part to his

use of performance enhancers and that he has been "unrepentant" and "unapologetic" about it.

Illston said none of that had any bearing on Bonds' sentencing.

She said she agreed with a probation department report that called Bonds' conviction an "aberration" in his life. She said she received dozens of letters in support of Bonds, some discussing how he has given money and time "for decades" to charitable causes.

Bonds is the last - and highest-profile—defendant in the government's investigation of the Bay Area Laboratory Co-Operative, or BALCO, a steroids distribution ring. The ex-sluggish has long denied knowingly using performance-enhancing drugs.

Illston said she was compelled to give Bonds a sentence similar to the two she meted out to other figures convicted after trial of lying to the grand jury and federal investigators about their connection to steroids.

The case against Bonds after he testified before the grand jury Dec. 3, 2003. Prosecutors revised his original 2007 indictment several times and spent a year unsuccessfully appealing a key evidentiary

ruling before jurors deadlocked in April on three of the four remaining charges related to his grand jury testimony.

On the final charge, the trial jury convicted Bonds of purposely answering questions about steroids with rambling non sequiturs in an attempt to mislead the grand jury.

"I think he probably got off a little easy," said Jessica Wolfram, one of the jurors who convicted Bonds of obstruction. "He was just so clearly guilty, so I actually am happy he got sentenced to something."

Wolfram said she researched the case after the trial and viewed evidence not presented then. After that, she felt even more comfortable that Bonds was guilty.

Besides Bonds, 10 people were convicted of various charges in BALCO cases. Six of them, including track star Marion Jones, were ensnared for lying to grand jurors, federal investigators or the court. Others, including Bonds' personal trainer Greg Anderson, pleaded guilty to steroid distribution charges.

The government's top BALCO investigator, Jeff Novitzky, declined to comment outside the courtroom after attending the hearing.

Reds get Latos from Padres for 4 players

CINCINNATI (AP)—The price tag for Mat Latos was daunting. The Cincinnati Reds were willing to pay it.

The Reds addressed their biggest offseason need on Saturday, acquiring the right-handed starter from San Diego for a package of four players that includes two top prospects.

Cincinnati gave up infielder Yonder Alonso and catcher Yasmani Grandal—both first-round picks—along with starting pitcher Edinson Volquez to get the 24-year-old Latos, who initially will move into the No. 2 spot in the rotation behind Johnny Cueto. Latos went 9-14 with a 3.47 ERA for the Padres last season, finishing among the NL leaders in ERA and strikeouts.

Mat Latos had 14 wins and 2.92 ERA for the Padres in 2010 but his numbers fell in 2011.

The trade surprised Latos, who said the Padres had indicated to him that he wouldn't be going anywhere.

"A little bit of shock and a little bit of excitement," Latos said, describing his reaction. "Shock because literally I wake up and I'm traded. Excitement because I'm excited to join a club that's got a lot of talent and a lot of potential. I'm excited for new scenery."

The Reds wanted him so badly that they were willing to give up a lot.

"To acquire a pitcher who is ready to fit into the top of a rotation, you have to give up talent," general manager Walt Jocketty said.

Latos joins a rotation that includes Cueto, Bronson Arroyo, Mike Leake and Homer Bailey. The rotation was a problem last season, with Cueto opening the season on the disabled list and Arroyo struggling with mononucleosis that he contracted during spring training.

Heading into the offseason, the Reds needed to get another top starter and a closer to replace departed Francisco Cordero. They think they've filled their first need.

"When we have Cueto and Latos at the top of our rotation, I think people are going to take notice," Jocketty said.

Latos tied a major league record by allowing two or fewer runs in 15 consecutive starts in 2010. Last season, he held right-handed batters to a .204 average and made 20 quality starts, tied for most on the Padres, who like their pitching depth.

"Mat, with all his success, I think grew up in a hurry in the big leagues and is probably going to do very well in Cincinnati," Padres general manager Josh Byrnes said. "We do have a good group of pitchers. We have

a very good group in Double-A coming up behind him. It was a tough trade to make, but ... we have a huge chunk of talent we have put in the system the last couple of years and ultimately I think that's our best path to success."

Alonso, the seventh overall pick in 2008, didn't have a place to play with Joey Votto a mainstay at first base. The Reds moved him to left field briefly last season, but he struggled defensively. The 24-year-old Alonso batted .330 with five homers and 15 RBIs in 47 games. Byrnes said he'll be a leading contender for the starting job.

Volquez was coming off a disappointing season, going 5-7 with a 5.71 ERA. The Reds got him from Texas in the trade for Josh Hamilton in December 2007. Volquez went 17-6 with a 3.21 ERA in 2008, when both he and Hamilton made the All-Star teams. Volquez needed reconstructive elbow surgery the following year and has never gotten back into form.

Grandal, the 12th overall pick in 2010, batted .305 with 14 homers and 68 RBIs at Class A, Double-A and Triple-A last season, making a quick rise through the farm system. He was slotted behind catcher Devin Mesoraco, a first-round pick in 2007 who made it to the majors last season and played in 18 games.

Jocketty said Reds were willing to trade Alonso and Grandal because they were stuck behind other players at their positions.

The Reds also gave up right-handed reliever Brad Boxberger, who went 2-4 with 11 saves and a 2.03 ERA last season at Double-A and Triple-A. Jocketty said Boxberger was the final piece in finishing the deal.

"It was very tough giving him up," Jocketty said. "We feel he was really starting to come into his own in the second half of the year. I don't think we would have been able to make the deal if he wasn't part of it."

Latos moves from a pitcher-friendly ballpark to Great American Ball Park, one of the most homer-friendly in the majors. He said he learned during a rough patch early last season that he couldn't let a ballpark's dimensions affect how he pitched.

"Earlier I was trying to be too fine with my pitches instead of just attacking with my strengths," Latos said. "I learned to just trust myself and go after hitters regardless of who it is or where we are. Cincinnati is said to be hitters' park. Philly is the same way. That doesn't mean where you're at or the park you're in to change your pitching style."

'El Terrible' wants fourth fight against Pacquiao



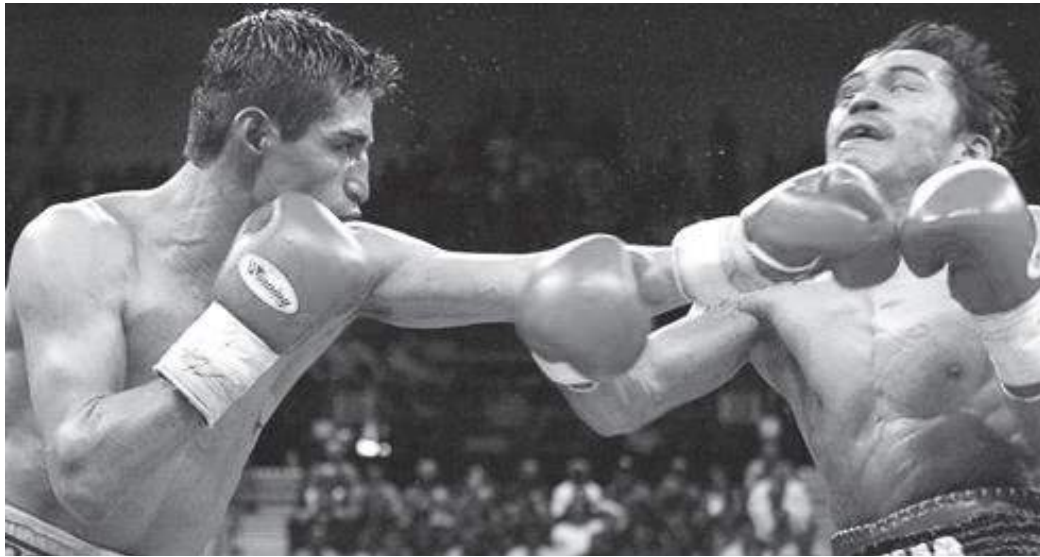
MANILA, Philippines—Legendary Mexican boxer Erik "El Terrible" Morales said he wants to get a fourth fight against the Philippines' fighting congressman, Manny Pacquiao.

The 35-year-old Morales, who already had a trilogy fight against Pacquiao, said he would relish a fourth encounter with the Filipino boxing icon.

"It is my dream fight. They all say I'm past my prime and I'm getting old," Morales told reporters at a recent press conference. "But I feel good. I feel young. Since my comeback, I've fought five fights and I'm enjoying each fight more. It is my dream fight, but let's wait. Let's motivate the fans first. Let's wait for people to say, 'we want a fourth fight between Morales and Pacquiao.'"

He, however, admitted that he still needs to earn the right to face Pacquiao again.

"Let's wait," said Morales.



Erik Morales, left, connects against Manny Paquiao during their bout in 2005.

"Let's motivate the fans first. Let's wait for people to say, 'we want a fourth fight between Morales and Pacquiao.'"

Morales, the only Mexican to win 4 titles in 4 weight classes, is the last man to have defeated Pacquiao.

In 2005, he defeated the Filipino by unanimous decision.

But Pacquiao came back with successive victories over Morales in 2006.

The Filipino earned a 10-round stoppage over Morales in their second bout.

Pacquiao then pulled off a more dominant win via third-round knockout in their third bout.

Morales said he would have wanted to fight Pacquiao's nemesis, Juan Manuel Marquez.

He, however, said Marquez wanted no part of him.

"The only reason that fight has not been made is because he doesn't want it," Morales said.

Miguel Cotto (37-2-0) also wants another shot against Pac-

quiao, so Morales will have to stand in line.

Morales feels he has matured a lot as a boxer since losing to Pacquiao, and he'll like the opportunity to even out the series between the two. Morales has looked good in the ring since his return, winning four of his last five fights since 2010.

The veteran boxer was impressive in his last fight against (then) undefeated Pablo Cesar Cano (22-1-1), stopping the 22 year old in the tenth round. Morales is currently set to face another undefeated young boxer in Danny Garcia (22-0), on Jan.

28, 2012, and a win would help him make his case for a fight against Pacquiao.

Depending on who you speak to, negotiations for a super-fight between Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather Jr. are still taking place, and the chances of Morales getting a shot at the Filipino champion are pretty low.

Besides, Pacquiao's two wins against Morales were very convincing, and Morales chances of tying the series are pretty slim. Still, if the super-fight between Mayweather and Pacquiao fails to materialize, Morales might just get his wish.

WUSSTIG

From Page 28

notched a TKO victory at 2:37 of the first round.

Fasi "Quickdraw" Jesse (8-4) manhandled Marianas Elite's Mai Tai "The Charger" Charley (3-8) in their featherweight bout, winning by tapout in just 1:07 of the first round.

In the opening round of the title fight, fighters tangled up early. Alvarez managed top position, but was caught in a headlock. They stood back up after Alvarez popped his head out and quickly pressed Wusstig into the fence with a clinch hold and worked another takedown. Fighters traded places as they fought on the ground for top position, but they eventually stood back up and traded some kicks before Alvarez slammed Wusstig to the mat.

Wusstig hung tough, however, and managed top position. Alvarez could not quite sink in his Kimura attempt from the bottom, but he did have top position at the bell. Round 1 ended with Alvarez having only a slight edge.

Then in Round 2, Wusstig rocked Alvarez with a haymaker shot as they came out of their corners, sending the latter's mouthpiece flying. Wusstig then pounced Alvarez and landed a flurry of strikes before taking his back. Wusstig almost choked him out, but Alvarez was a fierce warrior and refused

to tap. Both fighters looked gassed by the bell, but it was all Wusstig in Round 2.

Then in Round 3, Alvarez found an early takedown and it was his turn to fight from the top. He got in some nice strikes, but fighters traded places a few times as they battled for top position. At one point, Wusstig managed to wall crawl with his back against the fence, but Alvarez reverted to his clinch hold and dragged him back down.

From there Alvarez laid on top of Wusstig until the bell. Alvarez and Wusstig then threw a few strikes but there was not much power behind either fighter's blows as they both appeared winded after all the wrestling.

In Round 4, Alvarez led out with a big punch, slipped, and was lucky to recover with a clinch hold on Wusstig. With Wusstig against the fence, Alvarez worked a takedown and took his back, but the former rolled to the top position and would not let the latter up.

Wusstig held side control and snuck in some good shots. Alvarez tried his best to slip out, but Wusstig held on tight. With one minute left in the round referee Keith Nabors stood them up. Alvarez landed some nice kicks, but Wusstig answered with a big knee to the head. Round 4 went to Wusstig.

So it came down to the last round and Alvarez led out with a combination of punches that were countered well by Wusstig. Alvarez managed to

pull Wusstig to the ground, but was caught in another headlock. Alvarez worked top position, but Wusstig went for an arm bar from the bottom. Eventually, Wusstig found his way to the top position and held on for dear life. Alvarez tried for an arm bar from the bottom, but Wusstig dealt out some big kidney shots with his free hand.

When the fight ended, there was a small discrepancy in the judges' scorecards, but organizers came together and straightened it out. Normally, one has to beat the defending champion via TKO or unanimous decision to steal the title, but Wusstig still won as he was the better fighter Friday night. Even Alvarez acknowledged Wusstig's performance and they agreed to plan a rematch in the future.

In the heavyweight main event, fighters felt each other out briefly until Lassiter shot and landed a one-legged takedown. He took the top position and worked side control where he reigned down some big strikes causing Chong to cover up.

Then Lassiter hemmed Chong up in the crucifix position and bashed his head with some more big punches causing the quick, but exciting ending. Chong lay dazed on the mat for about 30 seconds, but rose to his feet under his own control.

In the semi-main event, Jesse led out with some leg trip attempts, but Charley's legs were longer, allowing him to fend them off. Jesse then closed

in and landed a huge knee to Charley's solo-plex, which may have knocked his wind out. Jesse wasted no time and sunk in a rear naked choke from the standing position as Charley's was leaning back against the fence. Jesse kept the hold in tact and began to pull Charley to the ground, and the later tapped soon after he touched the canvas.

In other results, Zalaka's Joe "Da Combo" Duenas (2-0) defeated Guam's Leandro Dalalo of Countershot MMA via tap out due to a guillotine choke at 2:36 in the first round of their 130-lb bout; Trench Tech's Vince "The Clinch" Magsa (2-0) sunk in a rear naked choke on Marianas Elite's Danny Agulto at 1:46 in the first round of their 150-lb bout; and Marianas Elite's Irvin "Da Knucklehead" Saralu defeated Fight Shop's Dennis Cruz at the two-minute mark of the first round in their 150-lb duel via referee stoppage due to a flurry of strikes from the mount position. Eight other bouts were featured in last Friday's event and information will be released later this week.

Trench Warz 15: Supremacy was sponsored by Miller-Lite, Docomo Pacific, Budget Rent-A-Car, the Department of Public Health, Century Hotel, Salbahe Brand, Chow It, Choke Chain Athletics, The Trapp, Master Construction, Hagu Next, Sea Horse Inc., Zeng Zung, Boarderline Skate Shop, Power 99, and WRS's Red Box.

isher, completing the race in 1:50:00, while Fred Camacho came in 50 seconds later, followed by Florence Antonio (1:56:30), Roxie Lamar (2:00:16), Joshua Berger (2:01:05), Tamio Nishido (2:01:10), Manny Castillo (2:03:00), Chang Wan Jang (2:06:12), and Natasha Kukuck (2:33:40).

(1:51:06), Team Tasi & PMT (1:52:06), Yard of Beef (1:52:53), Vicky's Roses (1:55:34), Shades and Glasses (1:58:55), Road Runners (2:00:16), Spito (2:02:35), Free Runners (2:08:21), Pedro TV (2:22:33), and Oh Yeah (2:23:40)

In the solo division, Danny Garcia was the top overall fin-

Other finishers in the five-person team event were Manic Racing (1:36:55), Team Hyatt (1:39:14), Nick Guys (1:39:23), Coconut Runners (1:40:22), Our Team (1:41:24), Safety First (1:44:20), Santa's Elves (1:44:30), The Dark Horse (1:45:00), Team PIC (1:46:45), I Love My Dentist (1:49:50), Tammy's Team

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1:43:23 for ninth place overall and was represented by Mikayla Lopez, Nathaniel Montano, Kevin Jack Deleon Guerrero, Edgem Bedania, and John Christian Piring.

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two attempts in the first half, but overshot the mark, while Hall could not break away from his defenders and anchored MP United Silver's offensive set.

"We did a good job on their scorers in the first half. We called Yi Shan at the back to defend Joyner in the first half and later used Dae Min Jeon and then checked Dakota every time he moves left so he can't start the play for his team," MP United U18 coach Brad Ruzsala said.

"But despite playing tough defense against MP United Silver, they gave us quite a scare, especially in the second half, so hats off to them," he added.

MP United U18 made it a 2-0 lead in the 58th minute when Wang eluded his defenders from the left wing and sprinted to the end line with Enrico del Rosario

at the last line of defense for MP United Silver and failed to stop the former who made a cross. Then four minutes after Wang converted his second goal, MP United U18 ran the same play and this time Hong scored for a 3-0 advantage.

MP United Silver managed to avoid a shutout loss when Del Rosario lit up the scoreboard in the 67th minute. Del Rosario, who plays center defender for MP United Silver, made a big kick from the backcourt and the ball headed straight at the center of the goal with MP United U18 goalie Diego Yoon leaping to catch it. The goalie temporarily had his hand on the ball but had butterfingers and dropped the leather, which eventually rolled in.

After del Rosario's goal, MP United Silver was left with 13 more minutes to score two more and force a shootout, but MP United U18 tightened up its defense to keep the lead.

ATALIG

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Meanwhile, Jeon Mi Ae and Lee Young Hi scratched 37s on both the front and back nines for a gross card of 74 that calculated into a ladies division field-low net of 69.2.

Other low gross finishers included runners-up Park Joung Hoon and Jason Yi who came up a stroke short on the back nine after keeping pace with the frontrunners for the majority of the round, and third placers Thompson Palik and Seung Woo Kang, who had a gross card of 65.

The men's low-net second placers were Ned Norita and Joe Suarez, who grossed a 67 that factored into a net 69.4, while Ed Manibusan and Nick Sablan rounded out the Top 3 with a raw 72 that adjusted into a 69.6 net score.

Noriko Togawa and Terry Guerrero took second place in the women's field with a gross score of 72 and 70.8 net, while two other pairs were awarded third place after Jeon and Lee's names were mistakenly included with the men's results list and the prize packages were already presented before organizers found the error.

As a result, Sherlyn Jones and Lorraine Babauata along with Abe Kimiko and Masayo Miyamoto were both awarded third place prizes.

Jones and Babauta turned in a 75 gross card that adjusted into a 72.6 net tally, while Kimiko and Miyamoto recorded a gross card of 79 that worked into a 73 net score.

In addition, Babauta won the longest drive challenge on Hole No. 10, while Palik's tee shot on Hole No. 7 rested just two feet and a half-inch from the cup for closest to the pin honors. Babauta won a \$100 cash prize with a \$50 fuel card, while Thompson took a round-trip ticket to Japan provided by Delta Airlines. Unfortunately there were no hole-in-one winners.

A \$600 cash prize was awarded to all first place winners, while \$300 and \$200 went to second and third placers. Seventy golfers joined the event which will have its proceed going to the Education Committee to help provide scholarships to five worthy students going to colleges here or off island. Earnings will also be used to help fund educational workshops that volunteer chamber members conduct to help promote business etiquette.

Weekend Sports

DFS Galleria, MP United U12 reign supreme

By **ROSELYN B. MONROYO**
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REPORTER

DFS Galleria and MP United U12 posted the biggest wins last week.

DFS dominated PSS/McGraw-Hill in the finals, 92-63, to clinch the championship in the 3rd Annual Shirley's Coffee Shop Invitational Basketball League at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

Pete Iguel led DFS' title victory, scoring 28 points and he also took home the Finals MVP.

PSS' Dave Sablan claimed the regular season MVP trophy and made it to the Mythical Five along with DFS' Jack Lizama, Fiesta's Elmer Esdreton, Mobil's Jun Estolas, and Shirley's Kae Bernardo.

Over at the Hopwood Junior High School Field, MP United U12 topped the FA Cup for boys U12 and girls U15 teams after beating Paire U12 in the finals, 1-0.

Amir Abes scored the lone goal in the finale and MP United U12 received the perpetual trophy from NMIFA president

Jerry Tan in a brief ceremony at the Hopwood pitch.

Still in football at the Oleai Sports Complex Field, the Final Four in the FA Challenge Cup (for boys U15 and U18 and women's squads) were completed last week with Matansa U18, Paire U18, and MP United U18 and U15 making the elite list. The two MP United squads went on to duel for the championship.

In the Men's FA Cup at the Oleai pitch, Inter Godfather and Wild Bill's advanced to the finals after their separate semis

wins. Wild Bill's claimed the first finals berth after downing Paire Football Club, 4-1, while Inter Godfather's triumphed over MP United A in the other semis pairing, 3-1. Inter Godfather and Wild Bill's played in the finals yesterday afternoon, but results of the title game were unavailable at press time.

Other notable performances last week were the record swims of Tsunami Saipan's Lukas Kang and Ryuto Yanai and the on-going basketball leagues on Saipan.

Yanai reset two more CNMI

age group marks in the boys U8 division, while Kang made one during the Tsunami Swim Circuit Series 4 at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi. Yanai swam in the 50m freestyle and timed in at 33.65 seconds to eclipse the CNMI age group mark (33.85) he set on Nov. 12, 2011. Then in the 200m freestyle, the 8-year-old Yanai timed in at 2:45.35, shaving more than five seconds from his previous age group record (4:50.52) logged on Feb. 4, 2011. Kang's lone record in the last swim circuit came

in the 200m individual medley where he logged 2:58.63, more than six seconds faster than his previous mark of 3:04.92 (April 15, 2011).

In the GBL IT&E Cup at the Garapan Basketball Court, IT&E Konflikt, Proa, and FGC advanced to the semifinals, while Blue Haus and Mobil will battle for the last Final Four slot.

At the Gualo Rai Basketball Court, the DLX caging continued with its regular season game with MDX keeping a perfect 6-0 record.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Northern Marianas Swimming Federation president John Hirsh, third row left, and Tsunami Saipan president Mark Staal, third row right, pose with Tsunami Saipan and Saipan Swim Club swimmers who received certificates for completing the Tsunami Saipan Swim Circuit Series.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

MDX's Dexter Tenonio pulls up for a shot against SCS Heavy Equipment defenders during their game in the DLX caging at the Gualo Rai Basketball Court.



WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND

Proa's Josh Sablan, right, is defended by Andhok's Alex Lauron during their game in the GBL IT&E Cup last Thursday at the Garapan Basketball Court.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

MP United U12 coach Joel Jimenez and his players celebrate after beating Paire U12 in the finals of the Boys and Girls FA Cup last week at the Hopwood Junior High School Field.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Wild Bill's Mark Epley kicks the ball during their semis game against Paire FC in the 2011 NMIFA Men's FA Cup last week at the Oleai Sports Complex Field.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

DFS Galleria's Dan Barcinas drives against a phalanx of PSS/McGraw-Hill defenders during their championship game in the 3rd Annual Shirley's Coffee Shop Invitational Basketball League last week at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

MP United U12's Bada Lee, right, receives the perpetual championship trophy from NMIFA president Jerry Tan during a brief awards ceremony for Boys and Girls FA Cup last week at the Hopwood Junior High School Field.



**Romo powers
Cowboys past
Buccaneers**

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Saipan Tribune Sports



**Rollins, Phillies
agree on 3-year,
\$33M deal**

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

MP United U18 tops FA Challenge Cup

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

MP United U18 hoisted the 2011 FA Challenge Cup trophy after outclassing MP United Silver in the finals, 3-1, last Saturday at the Oleai Sports Complex Field.



The much experienced and aggressive crew of MP United U18 showed tough love against their sister team's gunners and then found openings on MP United Silver (U15)'s defense to win the championship.

MP United U18 concentrated their defense on Jehn Joyner, Dakota Hall, and Jake Lee, who failed to score in the finals. On offense, Yi Shan Wang and Moon Bin Hong attacked at the end line in the second half to give MP United enough cushion after a precarious 1-0 lead in the first half.

Wang put MP United U18 in the lead in the first 40 minutes of play after connecting on a header in the 12th minute. Wang, Dae Min Jeon, and Hong made a couple more attempts, but MP United Silver stood its ground in the remaining minutes of the first half.

While MP United Silver hung in there on defense in the first half, it was a bit tentative on offense. Lee on a couple of occasions was steps away from his defenders and could have taken a shot, but backed out and opted for a pass. Joyner made

See MP on Page 26

MP United U18's Yi Shan Wang goes for a header, while MP United Silver defender Kennedy Izuka looks on during their championship match in the 2011 FA Challenge Cup last Saturday at the Oleai Sports Complex Field.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO



Team Track, Santa's Slaves win

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER



Team Track and Santa's Slaves topped last Saturday's 2011 Northern Marianas Athletics Christmas Island Relay.

Team Track ruled the open division of the 13.7-mile race from the Pacific Islands Club in San Antonio to the Last Command Post in Marpi with a time of one hour, 32 minutes, and 31 seconds, while Santa's Slaves prevailed in the youth category after clocking in at 1:33:56.

Racing for Team Track were Chad Lowe, Eric Bickel, Tom Linden, Kimiko McKagan, and Richard Sikkel. Lowe started the race for Team Track followed by Bickel, Linden,

McKagan and Sikkel. The five runners alternately ran one mile with Linden overtaking the Ketson "Jack" Kabiriel-led F-Faijuk in the second to the last mile and Bickel sprinting to the finish line to complete the come-from-behind win.

F-Faijuk submitted 1:32:36 to settle for runner-up honors. Joining Kabiriel on the team were his son, Kevin, Jackson Soichy, Jimris Handrew, and Aivan Farewey.

Santa's Slaves, which were composed of NMA runners Lia Rangamar, Beo Ngirchongor, Tanner Kenty, Reylynn Sapong, and Michael Mancao finished third overall and first in the U18 division, making it to the Last Command Post about 11 minutes faster than runner-up Hopwood.

Hopwood timed in at **See TEAM on Page 26**



From left, Team Track's Richard Sikkel, Eric Bickel, Kimiko McKagan, Tom Linden, and Chad Lowe, run together to the finish line of last Saturday's 2011 Northern Marianas Athletics Christmas Island Relay.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Wusstig grabs featherweight title

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

TRENCH TECH fighter Rob "The Real Deal" Wusstig of Counter Shot MMA dethroned Trench Tech Purebred's former featherweight champion Shane "Pikaboo" Alvarez after winning via split decision their five grueling round bout in the Trench Warz 15: Supremacy last Friday night at the Royal Taga Ballroom of Saipan World Resort.

It was not one of the main event bouts that evening, but both fighters put on a great show worthy of a top billing in the fight card. With the win, Wusstig improved to a 3-5 record and handed Alvarez (7-1) the first loss of his career.

While Alvarez lost the featherweight belt, his teammates fared well in the main event



WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND

New Trench Tech Purebred Promotions featherweight champion Rob "The Real Deal" Wusstig (3-5), left, smiles as referee Keith Nabors raises his hand after winning the title bout against Trench Tech's Shane "Pikaboo" Alvarez (7-1) during the Trench Warz 15: Supremacy last Friday at the Royal Taga Ballroom of Saipan World Resort.

bouts held after the title match.

Trench Tech's Mylo "Bam Bam" Lassiter got his third win after dominating Guam's Man-

ny Chong (8-9) of Team Thug Cop in the heavyweight main event finale brawl. Lassiter **See WUSTTIG on Page 26**

Atalig, Dela Cruz rule Chamber golf tourney

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER



J.J. Atalig Joey and Dela Cruz came out the low gross winners in the Saipan Chamber of Commerce's 4th Annual Holiday Golf Tournament held Saturday at Coral Ocean Point.

The duo tallied a 31 on the front nine and came to the clubhouse with a 32 on the back for a field-low gross 63 and topped the two-person scramble competition.

They also finished first place in the low-net category, but by default the prize was issued to Adam Hardwicke and Jeff Taylor who had 34s on the front and back nines for a raw score of 68 that was good enough for the nod, despite not electing to incur a handicap.

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WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND

J.J. Atalig, second left, and Joey Dela Cruz, far right, are presented with their cash prize for winning the Saipan Chamber of Commerce's 4th Annual Holiday Golf Tournament low gross category last Saturday at Coral Ocean Point. Also in the photo are, from left to right, executive director Richard Pierce, secretary Janice Tenorio, and president Doug Brennan.